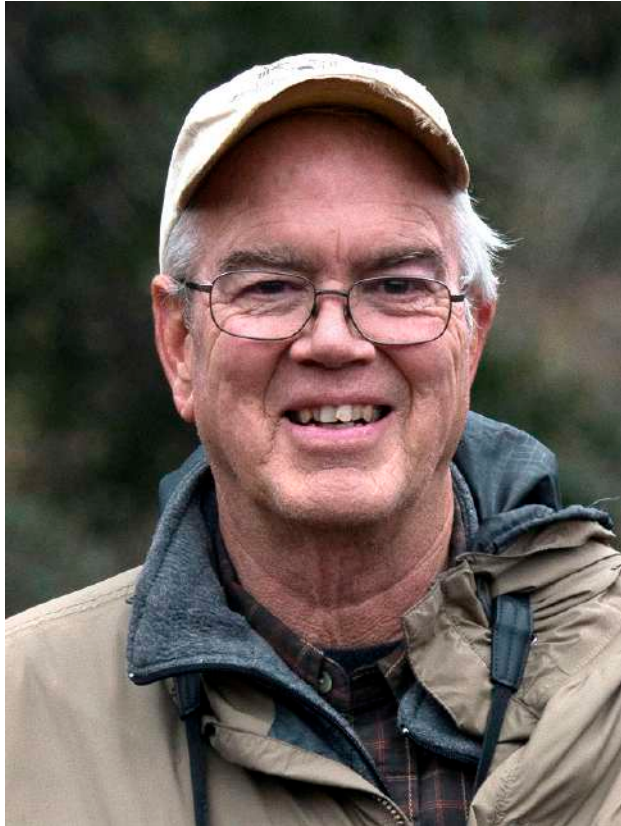




The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JANUARY 2019/VOL 55 NO 1

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)



David Leatherman

Monthly Program

Monday, January 28

Natural Wonders of Southeastern Colorado

David Leatherman

DFO monthly programs are held at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd, Denver. Programs begin at 7 PM.

Over the decades, politicians and some others have thought Southeastern Colorado to be a good place primarily for prisons, fracking, wind turbines, hog farms and the redirection of water away from agricultural fields to urban taps. But any birder/naturalist that has been in Colorado for more than 10 minutes knows that quadrant of our state is good for a lot more.

Down where Baca County is pronounced “BACK-uh,” amazing natural wonders persist in myriad forms despite the harshness of the rural Great Plains

environment. Temperatures can reach 110 degrees in June, and the snow depth can top 5 feet on New Year’s Day. Epic dust storms did not end with the 1930s Dust Bowl or its two-year return in the 1950s, either. On the right October day, tumbleweeds blown in mindless angles across the highway can challenge your ability to keep it between the lines. Hail, wind and drought can haunt any local farmer who dares book a winter vacation in Vegas before the harvest.

Even so, an abundant, resilient and mind-blowing array of other life forms awaits the observant visitor to Southeastern Colorado. In DFO’s first monthly program of the new year, devoted birder and bug expert David Leatherman of Fort Collins will extol the biodiversity that he has discovered and treasured in more than 40 years of visits to this underappreciated part of the state. In addition to the region’s avian life, he will discuss its reptiles and amphibians, arachnids, flowers and trees, fungi, crustaceans and mammals.

David Leatherman is retired from the Colorado State Forest Service, where he served as a forest entomologist, studying and conducting outreach about the Mountain Pine Beetle. He now writes *The Hungry Bird*, a regular column about what birds eat, in *Colorado Birds*, the quarterly journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. An exhibition of Leatherman’s photography continues on display at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in Boulder. Contact the Museum to see how long it will be there at cumuseum@colorado.edu or by calling 303-492-6892.

Joyce Takamine Retires From RBA

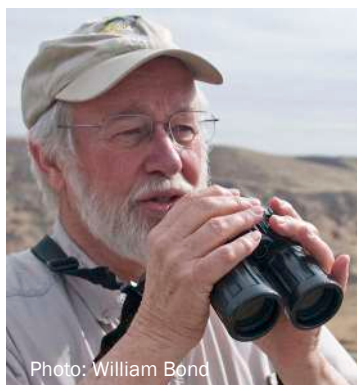


Photo: William Bond

From the President
Chuck Hundertmark

After more than 14 years of compiling and posting reports on Colorado's Rare Bird Alert (RBA), Joyce Takamine is retiring from her RBA duties. Birders in Colorado and beyond owe Joyce a debt of gratitude.

Except for rare periods when she was traveling, Joyce compiled the RBA list daily and posted it on CObirds – the listserv sponsored by Colorado Field Ornithologists – for anyone seeking rare or unusual birds to scan.

When Joyce first took on the RBA coordination role, the list was also recorded on a phone line. That entailed the tedious task of dialing up the phone line and reading aloud the list, species-by-species and county-by-county. Occasionally, when the phone line went down, the coordinator's job also required tracking down somebody to troubleshoot the telecom problem.

During those periods when Joyce was unable to compile, it took a pool of five or six volunteers to carry on a task she did entirely on her own.

Joyce's retirement from this volunteer role is effective Jan. 1, 2019. At this time, it is not clear whether the Colorado RBA will continue beyond that date.

DFO Past President Joe Roller has reached out through CObirds and DFO's email blast to recruit volunteers to continue the RBA. Joe envisions having one individual to assume the coordination role and several volunteers to share the daily posting tasks. Joyce has prepared a detailed guide to the sources of information she uses and the process she follows to produce the daily RBA.

Roller calls Colorado's RBA "a gem among other state RBAs" and adds, "Where else can you find rarities listed county by county?"

If you are interested in helping, please contact Joe at jroller9@gmail.com (or, in the manner that Joyce carefully lists emails on the RBA, jroller9 AT gmail DOT com).

Many birders today use CObirds, BirdTrax, or eBird to find rarities. But the RBA's county-by-county compilation has built a following of many devoted users both in Colorado and beyond. DFO, along with many birders in Colorado and elsewhere, is grateful for the diligent work Joyce Takamine has done for us and for birding in our state.

eBird Tip of the Month: Merlin Bird ID app

By Gregg Goodrich

The Merlin Bird ID app, by Cornell Labs, is the companion birding field guide to the eBird mobile app. There are seven great reasons to install the app on your smart phone:

1. The birds – more than 3,000 species from North, Central and South America and Europe are included.
2. The range maps – while most birding apps only map the North American range, this one helps you know where the bird spends the winter.
3. The bird photos – more than 8,000 stunning photos from eBird show male, female, juvenile, and winter.
4. The bird field identification feature – you can identify a bird in the field by answering a few simple questions. Based on your location and the time of year, Merlin will give you its best guess. Very helpful and amazingly accurate.
5. The ID-from-a-photo feature – Merlin can ID a bird from a photo you take with your phone or from your camera. The feature must be downloaded separately.
6. The bird sounds – Merlin has more than 3,000 audio recordings from eBird users.
7. The price – It's free!

Once you download the app on your smart phone, here are a few tips for how to use it.

On the opening screen is a menu with three options:

- “Start Bird ID,” will ask you about the bird you saw and, based on your answer, give you photos of possible matches.
- “Photo ID” will give you a possible bird ID from a photo you have taken.
- “Explore Birds” will take you to the field guide of birds.

From the main menu, select “Bird Packs” – lists of species for the areas you want to bird. Merlin contains these packs for various regions of the U.S., as well as for selected countries. So, if you are only birding in a certain area, you can download the Bird Pack for that area. Whenever you want or need more complete coverage for other places, you can download additional Bird Packs. Based on your smart phone's current location, Merlin tags the best pack for that area as “Nearby.”

Take advantage of this stellar app from Cornell and get it on your phone. Merlin will give you a fuller understanding and deeper appreciation of the wonderful world of birds.

DFO trip to Southeast Colorado
Credit: Mark Amershek



The 65th Denver Christmas Bird Count: Saturday, Dec. 15

By Joey Kellner

It is not too late to sign up to participate in the annual Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC), sponsored by the National Audubon Society. The 15-mile diameter “count circle” is subdivided into 24 count areas, each with a leader. Contact one of the area leaders listed below to participate in a specific area. Area leaders will provide information about where and when to meet. If you are willing to go wherever help is needed, contact Count Leader/Compiler Joey Kellner.

Contacts:

Count Leader/Compiler Joey Kellner – 303-978-1748, vireo1@comcast.net

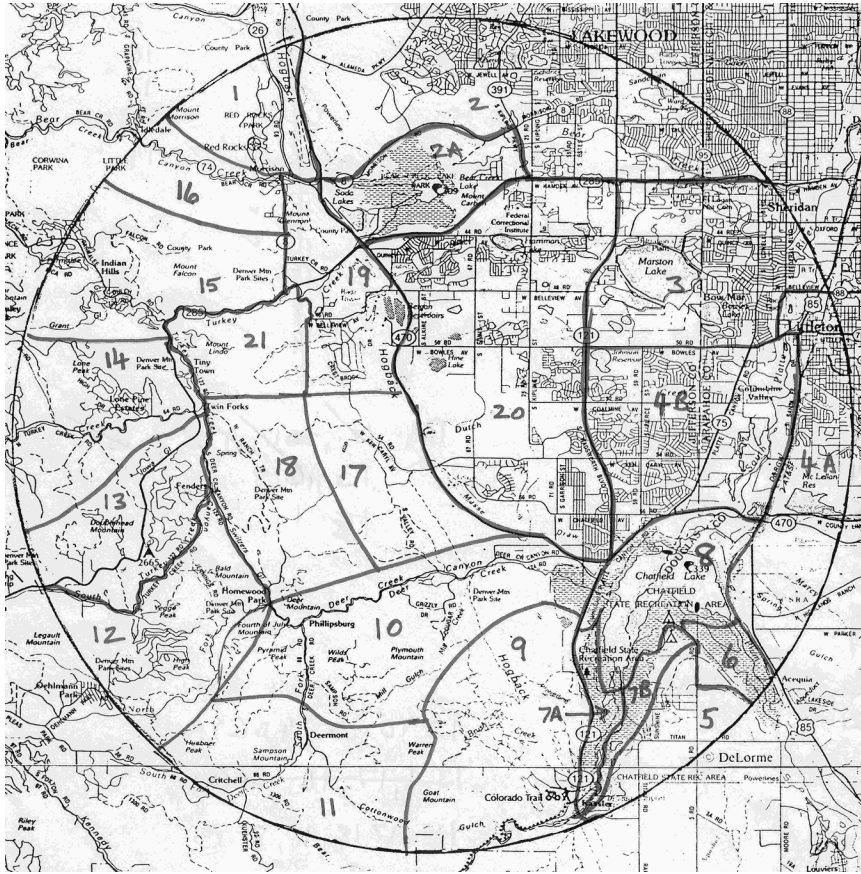
Feeder Coordinator Bob Shade – 303-975-2476, wrshade3@gmail.com

Area number	Location	Leader name	Leader phone number
1	Red Rocks Park	Dan Stringer	720-854-5911
2	Lower Bear Creek	Scott Somershoe	615-829-3573
2A	Bear Creek Lake Park	Mark Amershek	303-329-8646
3	Bow Mar/Marston	Bill Hopping	303-809-3053
4A	Lower South Platte - East	Ed Holub	303-979-2194
4B	Lower South Platte - West	Dean Shoup	720-272-9042
5	Highline Ditch	Nancy Crews	303-842-2833
6	Plum Creek	Norm Erthal	303-917-2596
7A	Middle South Platte - West	Charlie Lawrence	303-795-9126
7B	Middle South Platte - East	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
8	Chatfield State Park	Joey Kellner	303-978-1748
9	Upper South Platte *	Jill Holden	720-288-4018
10	Lower Deer Creek (Chatfield Arboretum)	Riley & Heather Morris	720-666-1644
11	Upper Deer Creek	Paul Slingsby	720-347-5169
12	Yegge Peak	Ann Bonnell	303-979-6211
13	Doublehead Mountain	Amy Davis	303-549-7759
14	North Turkey Creek	Ed Furlong	303-956-8321
15	Indian Hills	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217
16	Upper Bear Creek	Laura Steadman	843-319-5086
17	Ken Caryl Ranch	Tom Bush	303-919-5040
18	Garrison Gate	Bob Shade	303-975-2476
19	Morrison/Willowbrook	Chris Gilbert	804-214-1508
20	Willow Creek	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
21	Mount Lindo/Willow Springs	Bob Shade	303-975-2476

* To participate in this area count, you must contact the area leader **no later than Monday, Dec. 10.**

At day's end, a compilation meeting and Christmas Count potluck dinner will begin at 5 p.m. at Chatfield State Park headquarters (south side of the reservoir near the Heronry Overlook). A state parks vehicle entry pass required, so please carpool if possible. Ask your area leader about reimbursement if you do not have a vehicle pass.

Continued on page 5



IMPORTANT NOTE: Access to the Chatfield park headquarters meeting room will only be via the Titan Road/Roxborough Road entrance on the east side of the park. Because of construction, the road from the park's west entrance does NOT go through to park headquarters.

After the compilation meeting, all participants are invited to warm up, feast and chat with other birders at the potluck to find out how the count fared. The potluck is great fun, so please feel free to bring a dish or desert to share! Once again, Cheryl Teuton will coordinate the potluck, so please contact her at 303-912-3341 if you plan to bring a dish or item.

Join us Dec. 15 for a great day of birding and a great celebration afterwards. Whether you are a beginner, an expert or somewhere in between, you and all are welcome!

Welcome to new DFO members

Cynthia Cestkowski, Aurora; Leslie Coleman, Denver; Scott Hathcock and Patricia Cullen, Longmont; Mita and Paulus Fimreite, Broomfield; Sherri Karaian and Charles Karaian, Albuquerque; Roger Koester, Golden; Mark Minner-Lee, Broomfield; Scott Gaffri and Camille Schiraldi, Parker; Jena Vail, Parker

Thank you for your memorial donation

Chris Owens in memory of Richard Mendez and Chris Owens in memory of Jackie King

Thank you for your donation to the Research, Conservation and Education Grants Fund

Robert Beck, Tom Reilly and Frances Campbell, Dan and Carol Cook, Kevin Corwin, Jean and Charlie Curlee, Jim Esten, Sue Hall, David Hill, Roy Hohn, Marjorie Jannotta and Chuck Hundertmark, Debbie James, Judy Lane, Larry Modesitt, Jim Petri and Christie Owens, Luke and Tracy Pheneger, Suzanne and Bill Wuerthele

Big Year 2018: October & November Flight Log

By David Suddjian

DFO added two new species in October and eight new species in November, bringing our Big Year tally to 358 species after 11 months. With the final month to go, we need just seven more species to reach our one-bird-a-day challenge goal of 365 species in 2018. Can we do it? Circumstances are aligning well and we have a very strong set of trips lined up for December. We may just make it!



DFO organized and led 13 field trips in October and 19 in November, rounded out by the annual Big Sit at Chatfield State Park. Among these many trips were excursions that ventured far afield:

- Four trips explored the northeast and eastern prairies
- Two trips went to southeastern Colorado, including camping overnight in Cottonwood Canyon
- Another overnight trip covered Huerfano and Las Animas Counties
- DFO outings also went to Pueblo and Fremont counties and to the mountain lakes of Park and nearby counties

Species on the list of all birds ever recorded in Colorado were coded to help our Big Year planning:

- Code 1 – birds expected without special planning (193 species total from the state list)
- Code 2 – expected but some basic planning is needed (77 species total)
- Code 3 – specialty birds requiring trips to particular places at the right time (68 species total)
- Code 4 – rare birds that we could not specifically plan to encounter (165 species total)

We had already found all of the Code 1 and Code 2 species by Oct. 1. By the end of November we had found 52 of Code 3 species (77 percent of the total in that category), and 36 of the Code 4 species (22 percent of Code 4 species). New Code 3 species found were:

- Surf Scoter at Chatfield Reservoir in Douglas/Jefferson counties
- Pacific Loon at Antero Reservoir in Park County
- American Golden Plover at NeeNoshe Reservoir in Kiowa County**
- Black Scoter at South Platte Park Reservoir in Arapahoe and Jefferson counties
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Pueblo City Park in Pueblo County***

New Code 4 species found were:

- Fork-tailed Flycatcher near Erie in Boulder County*
- Black-legged Kittiwake at Spinney Mountain Reservoir in Park County**
- Cape May Warbler at Pueblo City Park in Pueblo County*
- Blackpoll Warbler at Longmont in Boulder County
- Harris's Hawk at Fossil Creek Reservoir in Larimer County*

* – species new for DFO's life list

** – species found for second time ever

*** – species found for third time ever

One more month will complete our DFO Big Year. Don't miss out! Sign up now for a DFO field trip and be part of the fun.

January Birding: What birds to look for, and where



By Ira Sanders

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, The Lark Bunting is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. This month and in the months to follow, I'll give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I'll concentrate on less common birds you may see in that season. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding!

In January 2009, the average high in Denver was 43 degrees and the average low was 16. Today, the average high in Denver is 49 degrees and the average low is 20.

Winter is the time to be looking for **Snowy Owls** on the plains of Colorado. If you are anywhere east of the I-25 corridor, be alert for something that may look like a white fireplug or water hydrant sitting on the ground.

This is also the time to be alert for our largest falcon, the **Gyr Falcon**. Gyrfalcons can be seen on power poles and seem to prefer areas near open bodies of water where they can pick off ducks.

If you are out on the plains, watch for **Lapland Longspurs** and **Snow Buntings** mixed in with flocks of Horned Larks.

Rosy-Finches – Black, Brown-capped and Gray-crowned – are most easily found in the winter at some bird feeders. Georgetown and Silver Plume have entertained rosy-finches if someone there is feeding birds. During the winters of 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, there were flocks of rosies at our house in Golden, but that spectacle has not repeated since then. If they do show up again, I will post on the CObirds listserv.

Red Crossbills, and very infrequently, **White-winged Crossbills**, can sometimes be found in large urban cemeteries with mature spruce trees. I've seen Red Crossbills at Genesee Park, a Denver Mountain Parks location just off I-70 west of Golden at Exit 254. The crossbills were up the road on the south side of I-70 at the last parking area with an outhouse.

Also, keep watching for **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** in clumps of large-diameter pines along the Front Range. You can key in on fresh sap wells or on this bird's habit of drilling holes in a spiral around the tree. Canyon City and Pueblo City Park have been a good place for sapsuckers in recent years.

If you see flocks of Cedar Waxwings, make sure to sift through them for **Bohemian Waxwings**. There have been big invasions of these rarer waxwings in recent years. They like juniper berries and crabapples, as well as other berries.

Continued on page 8

There are good places to look for rarer **waterfowl** and **gulls** along the Front Range. A spotting scope is almost always a must when looking at waterfowl at lakes and reservoirs. Places to consider include:

- Valmont Reservoir in Boulder County
- Hamilton Reservoir at the Rawhide Power Plant, 18 miles north of Fort Collins in Larimer County near Wyoming (if the observation area is open)
- Pueblo State Park, west of Pueblo
- Cherry Creek State Park in Arapahoe County
- Chatfield State Park in Jefferson and Douglas counties
- South Platte River, south of 88th Avenue in Thornton and continuing to south of 74th Avenue in Denver County

The south marina on Lake Pueblo near the entrance to Pueblo State Park has hosted at least one if not two **Great Black-backed Gulls** in winter for the past 25 years. If you are looking for **Wood Ducks**, the lake in Pueblo City Park has them.

If you want to make an out-of-state trip, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge south of Socorro, NM, is a great place for a spectacle of **Snow** and **Ross's Geese** as well as other waterfowl and thousands of **Sandhill Cranes**.

My thanks to Dick Schottler, Dave Leatherman and Karl Stetcher for their contributions to this month's column.

Support the DFO Research, Education, and Conservation Fund

By Chris Goulart

The Research, Education, and Conservation Fund is the way that DFO supports science, conservation, and education about relevant ornithological issues. Applications are now being accepted for fund grants, and the DFO Grants Committee is prepared to review all qualified requests for funding. The link to application information on the DFO website is <https://dfobirds.org/Grants/Application.aspx>

Applicants for these grants should complete and submit their applications to DFO **no later than Feb. 1, 2019**.

In past years, DFO has awarded grants for research, conservation, and education in numerous bird-related fields and topics, including:

- Grassland bird conservation
- Sagebrush habitat research and preservation
- Mountain Plover breeding research
- Cinnamon Teal nesting success
- Bird banding initiatives and actions
- Screech Owl research
- Bluebird research

In addition to accepting grant applications, the DFO Grants Committee is actively soliciting donations to the fund to provide resources for important Colorado-based bird research, education and conservation. Please donate today! No amount is too big or small to help further DFO's effort to support science and conservation for birds within Colorado.

Donations can be made via the website at <https://dfobirds.org/Grants/Donate.aspx>.

Field Trip Leader Forum: After DFO's "Big Year," what's ahead for 2019?



Sandhill Cranes (Credit: Jim Esten)

By Pat O'Driscoll

With the Denver Field Ornithologists' epic "Big Year" about to wrap up, nearly half of our club's 50 or so field trip leaders gathered at the Barr Lake Nature Center in early November to review a very successful 2018 and look forward to 2019.

For five jam-packed hours on Nov. 10, the fourth DFO Field Trip Leader Forum featured spirited discussion and feedback aimed at keeping our leading-edge series of free birding outings the best program of its kind in the land. Topics included improving preparation and training for trip leaders, the planned 2019 start of "Better Birding" courses for members, the return to DFO of responsibility for metro Denver's annual spring and fall bird counts, and a renewed appeal for participation in our "citizen science" projects.

After welcoming remarks and appreciation from DFO President Chuck Hundertmark, the forum kicked into gear with a detailed update from Big Year coordinator and mastermind David Suddjian.

The Big Year stats speak for themselves: by the end of December, DFO will have organized and led more than

230 field trips in 2018, smashing the club's previous outing output for an astonishing average of nearly 20 trips a month. For 2018, DFO led trips in 54 of Colorado's 64 counties, 19 of them new territory for the club. In the process of pushing closer to the one-per-day holy grail of 365 species in this Big Year (356 as of Nov. 27), our field trips collected 33 new state birds for DFO's own "life list."

After DFO organized 15 overnight field trips in 2018, Suddjian suggested one appropriate encore for 2019: overnights to the 10 remaining Colorado counties not yet birded by the club.

There was also discussion about taking steps to improve the quality of field trips. Besides suggestions of a field trip manual update, new leader birding standards and ways to channel constructive feedback from trip participants, the forum raised the idea of refreshers for leaders in trip management and behavior. Suggestions include work on group dynamics, etiquette, time management and making some trips more novice-friendly by working group field identification and tips into the outing.

Continued on page 10

As if to test the forum participants, Hundertmark led a light-hearted bird-ID quiz that had each table of leaders pulling out their binoculars to scan photos of tricky shorebirds and more on the meeting-room screen for field marks and other ID clues.

Other highlights:

- Hundertmark reported that under the coordination of Vice President Dave Hill, management of the Colorado Spring and Fall Bird Counts is returning to the club some 50 years after DFO last led the program
- Karen Drozda, DFO's Better Birding coordinator, reported that work is underway to offer modestly priced, 1- to 2-session workshops starting next spring in topics such as birdsong, bird topography (the visible parts of a bird's anatomy), habitat, better eBirding and more
- Trip leader and eBird expert Gregg Goodrich, who has led DFO outings that doubled as tutorials in using the eBird mobile app in the field, led a short how-to on eBird tools for trip leaders
- DFO Colonial Waterbirds Project coordinator Patrick O'Driscoll outlined plans to recruit trip leaders and DFO members to help in this citizen science effort to collect data in the field during nesting season at several park colonies of cormorants, herons and egrets. 2018 marks the third season of data gathering, now in partnership with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' Colony Watch

Field Trip chair Karen von Saltza also led an open discussion about successes and problems in the trip program. Forum participants found far more to applaud than not.

The special nature of DFO's outings – far more trips, free to members and non-members alike, than in any other place in the country – remains the core of our success. “What a joy it is to see this group and know where we have come from,” remarked one longtime member. Another praised trip leaders and members who go out of their way to help participants, such as students and out-of-state or foreign visitors who need transportation to more distant trips. “To me, it speaks a lot about the community we've created here,” said still another.



Wood Ducks
Credit: Jim Esten

January Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. February field trips will appear on the website on Jan 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park Wednesday, January 2 6:45 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Aurora Reservoir entrance road (S. Powhatchon Rd) at E Quincy Avenue, about 1.5 miles east of E470.

A good way to jump start the new year list is to visit Aurora Reservoir for possible interesting gulls, geese, ducks and other waterbirds. Prepare for a cold start to the day along the reservoir edge. Bring a scope if you have one. We may visit Cherry Creek SP or another spot in the south Metro Area.

First Creek at RM Arsenal Sunday, January 6 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north). In addition to winter-resident sparrows, creek waterfowl and other land birds, expect plenty of hawks, eagles and maybe falcons

Time permitting, we'll do both sides of Buckley Road. A scope may help with distant raptors.

Elbert County Monday, January 7 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at Safeway in Elizabeth, at 220 S. Elizabeth Drive, right off Highway 86.

This trip will likely focus on visiting pine forest and nearby areas from Elizabeth to the town of Kiowa and beyond. Elbert is seldom birded, and seldom reported in winter especially, so we can add some good data. Restroom opportunities will be limited.

Southwestern Metro Area Thursday, January 10 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Dale Pate
Email: dalepate@gmail.com
Phone: 575-706-4584
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at West Deer Creek Canyon Road near Wadsworth.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip based on what is around and weather, but may include portions of the S. Platte River Corridor, ponds and lakes, and Red Rocks Trading Post in search of interesting winter birds.

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76 Saturday, January 12 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mark Amershek
Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

We will see lots of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trail and occasionally in the adjacent mud for up to 3 miles.

Denver City Park (Denver County) Sunday, January 13 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake in City Park.

We'll expect to see a variety of waterfowl depending on the extent of freezing on Ferril and Duck lakes. With luck, a Bald Eagle might be hanging out. Expect a variety of seasonal residents and perhaps some surprises. We'll visit both lakes and a variety of possible hotspots at both ends of the park on a 3-mile stroll.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, January 13 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

January Field Trips Continued...

South Platte River Reservoir and River Trail

Monday, January 14

7:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at parking lot adjoining the South Platte Reservoir.

After exploring the reservoir, we will check the river and nearby lakes north of C470, and/or go to the Northern Wildlife Area and Reynold's Landing. 3-4 miles of walking. Bring a scope if you have one.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)

Saturday, January 19

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Edward "Buzz" Schaumberg

Email: EGSEAGLE171@aol.com

Phone: 303-478-4641

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at WEST entrance of Park. Go east from Yosemite St on Union Ave past Cherry Creek High School to west entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Scopes are useful. This is a good trip for beginners or infrequent birders who have made New Years resolutions to bird more in 2019.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

Sunday, January 20

7:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

We will explore different areas of the Arsenal including lakes and back trails. Expect to see raptors, Bald Eagles, waterfowl and wintering sparrows. We will do some short trail walking. Scopes would be helpful.

South-Central Colorado

Monday, January 21

5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

This trip will loop from Pueblo County through Fremont County and up in to Teller County where we finish with an attempt to find Rosy-Finches at Victor. It will be possible to see a Great Black-Backed Gull and a Black Rosy-Finch on the same day! Plan for a full day, and plan to carpool. Bring lunch.

Bobcat Ridge Natural Area

Saturday, January 26

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Park and Ride, US 287 and Niwot Road

We'll carpool 50 minutes to the Bobcat Ridge Natural Area to search for American Woodcock. Short walk along creek, then either a four-mile walk on Valley Loop Trail or a drive to other Larimer or Boulder County hotspots to track recent sightings. Bring lunch. Leader will send details week of trip.

Chatfield State Park

Sunday, January 27

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Meet near the east entrance to the park and the Highline Canal parking lot along Roxborough Road just before reaching the park entrance. We will carpool from there, as needed.

Explore the park for winter migrants, waterfowl, resident birds, and raptors. Bring a scope if you have one. If something good is being seen at South Platte Reservoir then we might go there as well.

Park County Explorations

Tuesday, January 29

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at King Soopers in Aspen Park off Highway 285 at 25637 Conifer Road. Meet at the south side of the parking lot overlooking Hwy 285.

An informal series of trips to explore beautiful Park County's avifauna and interesting ecology. This trip will likely search for flocks of rosy-finches visiting feeders in towns in northern South Park, with a chance also for Northern Shrike, Rough-legged Hawk, Canada Jay and more. Limited walking. Bring food and drink (a group lunch at a restaurant may be proposed).

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@gmail.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2021)	willburt43@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2019)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Will Burt, Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
----------------------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

January 28, 2019
Dave Leatherman
*The Natural Wonders
of Southern Colorado*

February 25, 2019
Steve Jones
Swan Lakes

March 25, 2019
Ted Floyd

April 22, 2019
Nathan Pieplow

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	25
☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	60
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$	10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/FEBRUARY 2019/VOL 55 NO 2

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)



Steve Jones (above)
Trumpeter Swan family at 10-mile Lake
(Credit: Steve Jones)

Monthly Program

Monday, February 25
Nebraska's Swan Lakes
Steve Jones

*DFO monthly programs are held
at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver,
3021 S. University Blvd, Denver.
Programs begin at 7 PM.*

Detailed maps of western Nebraska show four separate bodies of water each called "Swan Lake." All four lakes were named by homesteaders and ranchers during the 1880s, so we can surmise that Trumpeter Swans were nesting on them. By 1900, all the trumpeters on the Great Plains had been wiped out by homesteaders and market hunters. Many scientists believed the species had become extinct.

Then in 1919, biologists found two Trumpeter Swan nests near Yellowstone National Park. The swans slowly began to return to their historic nesting grounds on the northwestern Great Plains with help from conservationists. Biologists counted 69 swans in the northern Rockies by 1932.

More than 80 years later, during spring and summer of 2016, Boulder environmental consultant and author Steve Jones visited three of Nebraska's four Swan Lakes. What he saw and heard was enough to bring tears to his eyes, along with a sense of hope for the future.

Jones holds master's degrees from Boston University in U.S. social and environmental history and from Stanford University in secondary teaching. He is the author of *The Last Prairie*, *a Sandhills Journal* and *Owls of Boulder County*. He is co-author of *The Shortgrass Prairie*, *Peterson Field Guide to the North American Prairie*, *Colorado Nature Almanac*, *Wild Boulder County*, and *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*. Jones' consulting work includes more than three-dozen breeding bird and resource inventories for city, county, and state open space and wildlife programs. He has led field trips and taught nature classes for 35 years and he taught in the Boulder Valley Public Schools for 33 years.

2019 Brings Changes to DFO



From the President
Chuck Hundertmark

The new year ushers in a few changes at DFO. Our 2018 Big Year is behind us and we can reflect on that accomplishment. We'll be meeting in a new venue for our monthly programs. And in March, we'll be hosting a special raptor identification workshop in addition to our usual monthly meeting.

DFO's 2018 Big Year ended up with an impressive 361 species recorded on club field trips. While some birders may suffer withdrawal symptoms

from the intensive pace of the year's competitive listing excursions around the state, early signs are there will continue to be plenty of field trips to enjoy in 2019. So far, trip leaders have scheduled comparable numbers of field trips in January and February as in the same months of our Big Year effort.

Beginning in January, our monthly programs will be held on the fourth Monday of the month at Unity Spiritual Center Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd. in Denver. We'll be meeting at that location for all eight of our 2019 monthly programs (January-April and August-November).

The church has ample parking and an excellent sanctuary that will serve as our auditorium. The change in location was necessary because Denver Museum of Nature and Science, our usual meeting venue, will undergo an extensive renovation in 2019.

In a new twist this year, Colorado's own raptor guru, Brian Wheeler, has agreed to offer a special program on raptor identification on Saturday, March 30. Details of the afternoon workshop are still being worked out. If learning more about eagles, hawks and falcons is on your new year's resolution list, save the date and plan to attend.

Wheeler has written or provided photographs or illustrations for a handful of raptor identification guides. Last year, he added two new field guides to his body of work. *Birds of Prey of the East: A Field Guide* and a companion western guide are masterfully executed handbooks to the identification of birds of prey. This will be a not-to-miss program.

I hope 2019 brings you good birding.

DFO Membership Renewal Window Still Open

Mary Cay Burger,
Membership Chair

As of the end of December 2018, nearly 300 DFO members had paid their 2019 dues. That leaves about 200 memberships in the expired category.

If you are one of the lapsed members, don't despair! The window for renewing your membership in DFO is still open. Put renewing your membership on your to-do list today. Here are three ways to get it done:

- Renew online with a credit card at <https://dfobirds.org/DFO/Membership.aspx>
- Print the membership form in The Lark Bunting and mail it to Mary C. Burger, 10826 E Maplewood Place, Englewood, CO 80111
- Bring a check to the DFO monthly program on January 28, 2019. I will be there to help you continue to be a part of the DFO community.

Questions?

Contact Mary Cay Burger at 720-940-8394 or via email at mcburger3@juno.com.

KEEN VISION

This article reprinted courtesy of The Peregrine Fund



Red-tailed hawk
(Credit: Jim Esten)

Birds of prey have excellent eyesight. Scientists estimate that they can see two to eight times better than humans. With good eyesight often come big eyes. And, indeed, raptors' eyes are very large compared to the size of their heads. If our eyes were the same size as a raptor's in proportion to our skulls, we would have eyes as big as oranges!

Think of the expressions "watching like a hawk" or "eagle eyes." They refer to the amazing eyesight of all birds of prey, not just eagles and hawks. Since most raptors are hunters, they must be able to see their prey, sometimes from great distances, and calculate just the right moment to strike. In fact, scientists have shown that some raptors can spot medium-sized prey from at least one mile away. That would be like spotting a rabbit across more than 17 football fields lined up in a row! If that weren't impressive enough, birds of prey must be able to maintain focus on their prey while in fast pursuit. Raptors also use their eyesight to identify other members of their species and to avoid predators.

Specialized adaptations

To help them do all of these amazing things, raptors' eyes have many interesting adaptations. First, the birds have

what is called binocular vision. Like many other animals that hunt for food, including humans, a raptor's eyes face forward. That creates some overlap between what the right eye and left eye see. This helps them determine how far away an object is. Forward facing eyes are important for an animal that makes its living chasing moving prey. Compare a raptor's eyes with those of a prey animal, such as a deer. Notice that the deer's eyes are much farther apart, almost on the sides of its head. This eye placement works well for deer to see predators that try to sneak up on them.

If you watch a bird of prey long enough, you will probably see it bob its head from side to side, move its head around in circles, or even turn its head almost completely upside down. This isn't some kind of strange dance. Raptors do this to triangulate in on an object and better determine how far away it is.

Most birds are able to see ultraviolet (UV) light, which is invisible to humans. This may be beneficial for many reasons. It allows them to see urine trails left by some prey animals, such as mice and voles. Urine and feces of some rodents contain elements that reflect UV light. Their urine trails are like neon signs that lead the raptors right to them. Diurnal raptors are active during the day. They have good color vision. Owls, which are mostly

Continued on page 4

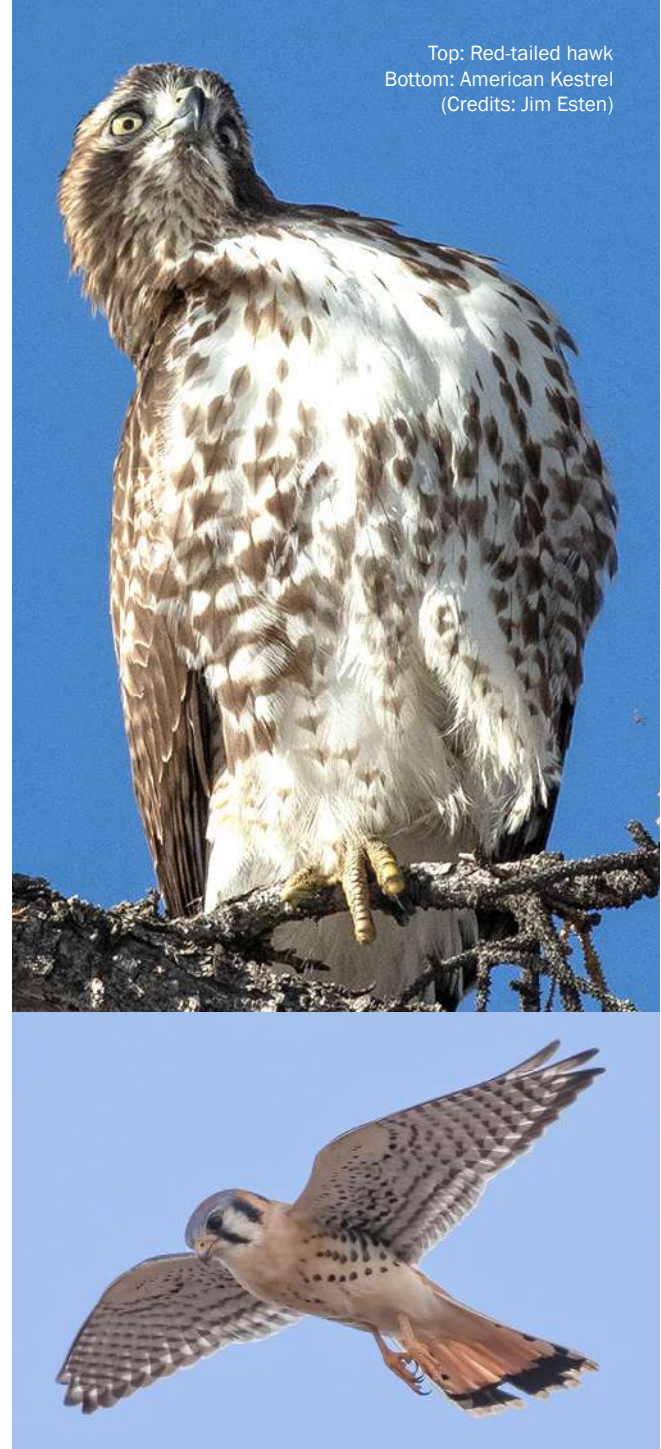
nocturnal or active at night, have less ability to see in color. But, they have the amazing ability to see in very low light conditions. While they probably can't see too well in pitch blackness, even the tiniest amount of light from the moon or other source enables them to see and catch their prey.

Critical for survival

A raptor's eyes are very important to its survival. Accordingly, raptors have several features that help protect these valuable organs. To start with, their eyes are surrounded by bone, which helps protect the eye and hold it in place within the skull. Because of this, birds of prey can't move their eyes in their heads like we can. To look left or right or up or down, the bird must move its entire head. To compensate for this limitation, raptors are equipped with flexible necks that enable them to turn their heads a lot further than we can. Contrary to popular belief, an owl cannot turn its head 360 degrees from a forward-facing position. However, it can turn its head at least 180 degrees, maybe up to 270 degrees, from a forward-facing position. Not too shabby!

For additional protection, raptor eyes are equipped with not one, not two, but three eyelids. Two of their eyelids are just like ours; they move up and down to close their eyes. The third eyelid is known as a nictitating membrane and is the eyelid they use to blink. It is a thin, semi-transparent lid that moves from side to side. Closing and opening it helps keep their eyes moist and clean. When closed, it helps to protect the bird's eyes while still allowing some vision. Birds of prey might close their nictitating membrane when feeding their chicks, contacting prey, during a fast dive, or during a heavy rainstorm. An osprey closes its nictitating membrane when it dives into water after fish, just like we might put on a pair of goggles before plunging in to a pool.

Finally, birds of prey have a bony ridge above the eye. Feel above your eye, where the eyebrow grows. Humans also have a bony ridge there. In raptors, this helps to protect their eyes from protruding branches or other foreign objects. This can be very helpful when hunting



Top: Red-tailed hawk
Bottom: American Kestrel
(Credits: Jim Esten)

in areas of thick vegetation where a stray twig or leaf could accidentally poke a raptor in the eye. This bony ridge also acts like a built-in baseball cap, since it helps shade their eyes from the sun! Some people think that birds of prey look angry or menacing because of this "rigid brow," but in reality, it is just one of the many useful features a bird of prey has to help it remain healthy. The more we learn about animal behavior and adaptations, the better we understand that even though an animal may look or act strange or silly to us, chances are it looks and behaves in exactly the ways it needs to in order to survive.

February: What birds to look for, and where

By Ira Sanders

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, The Lark Bunting is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

In February, the average high in Denver is 47 degrees and the average low is 20 degrees. That is an increase of 4 degrees on both high and low temperatures from January, though we all know it can be considerably warmer and colder. One source I consulted showed these temperatures while another has the average high at 50 degrees.

It is certainly still winter, so what I said about January is also true for February. When you are out on the plains and in the foothills, keep your eyes open for early **bluebirds**. Cañon City and Pueblo City Park are now entertaining **sapsuckers** in the yellow pines and other pines in both places. Tunnel Drive in Cañon City is a reliable spot for **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** and **Canyon Towhee**. A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** wintered there with flocks of White-crowned Sparrows in 2007 and 2008.

Continue to check the South Platte River between 88th and 74th avenues. Quite a few good birds can be found there including **Barrow's Goldeneye**. Pueblo Lake State Park can have 10 species of **gulls** this time of year. Start at the tire jetty at the marina below the visitor center and don't forget to check the river below the dam for **Black Phoebe** and other wintering birds when you go from the south side to the north side of the lake. Valco Ponds, east of the park, is a good place for **sparrows** and other brush-seeking species. There was also a **Black Duck** there many years ago.

Great Horned Owls start laying eggs as early as mid-January, so you may hear and see increased activity among them. These owls nest in many places in Colorado, from mountain forests and across the plains. There is a good chance there is a pair nesting near you. Where the owls can't find the abandoned nest of a hawk or magpies, they can nest on the ground. Both **Golden Eagles** and **Bald Eagles** will start nesting in February. Baldies have nested at Barr Lake for many years. The nest is easily seen from the Neidrach Trail or the gazebo. The gazebo hike is about 1-1.2 miles.

This is a great time of year to find up to six species of geese by scanning through the huge flocks that winter in Colorado. Weld and Larimer counties are an especially good place to find **Canada, Cackling, Snow, Ross's** and **Greater White-fronted Geese** and **Brant**. This year, the famous **Pink-footed Goose** has continued to be seen in Frederick at Milovec Reservoir. A Brant has also been in the area.

Winter is a good time of year to learn about nests while tree branches are bare and last summer's nests are visible. Try to pick up discarded monofilament fishing line and red plastic binder twine during your winter walks, as these are harmful to birds.

The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge south of Socorro, NM, is still a great place for a spectacle of Snow and Ross's geese, as well as other waterfowl and thousands of **Sandhill Cranes** in February.

Don't forget the importance, during extended periods of winter thaw, of watering the trees and shrubs you have planted for birds in your yards. An online fact sheet for this, "Fall and Winter Watering," is available from the [CSU Cooperative Extension](#).

Top: Savannah Sparrow
(Credit: Diane Roberts)
5/2/2018

Left: Cassins Finch
(Credit: Diane Roberts)
4/28/2018



Lewis Woodpecker
(Credit: Jim Esten) 3/18/2018

DFO Big Year 2018: What a Year It Was

By David Suddjian

Big Year 2018 was a success by any measure. There is, of course, the number: 361 species. We outstripped our expectations. We surpassed DFO's prior annual best of 277 with our number 278 Chestnut-sided Warbler at the Stulp Farm in Prowers County on May 9. We met our initial goal of 333 species with the only Red Knot found in Colorado this year, seen at Prewitt Reservoir in Washington County on August 22.



By September 15, a Prothonotary Warbler at Chatfield in Jefferson County took us to number 345, which was more than the total species found by DFO before 2018. We nod to number 350 – the regal Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Boulder County on October 30.

Ending November with 358 species, we pushed on through December, fielding a strong 14 field trips and adding three final species: Pine Warbler at Littleton in Jefferson County on December 3, Colorado's first Pink-footed Goose at Frederik in Weld County on December 16, and finally number 361 Golden-crowned Sparrow at Morrison in Jefferson County on December 18.

Seeing 361 species on DFO field trips ranks us in fourth place for Colorado groups using the eBird Top 100 metric. But to appreciate our other measures of success, let's take a look behind the number.

Great Birds

We saw so many great birds in 2018! View the whole list on our web page. DFO added 35 new Colorado Life Birds on Big Year trips. Many of these were regional specialties, such as Piping Plover, Baltimore Oriole, Gray Vireo, Lucy's Warbler and more – highlighting DFO's reach into new parts of the state in 2018.

New Colorado Life Birds for DFO

Pink-footed Goose	Red-breasted Sapsucker
Gunnison Sage-Grouse	Vermilion Flycatcher
Lesser Nighthawk	Fork-tailed Flycatcher
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Bell's Vireo
Anna's Hummingbird	Gray Vireo
Black Rail	Purple Martin
Piping Plover	Varied Thrush
Red Knot	Bohemian Waxwing
White-rumped Sandpiper	Field Sparrow
Least Tern	Black-throated Sparrow
Yellow-billed Loon	Sagebrush Sparrow
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Baltimore Oriole
White Ibis	Lucy's Warbler
Harris's Hawk	Mourning Warbler
Flammulated Owl	Black-throated Green Warbler
Western Screech-Owl	Hepatic Tanager
Snowy Owl	Scarlet Tanager
Northern Saw-whet Owl	

Continued on page 8



DFO birders at Chico Basin Ranch
(Credit: Cathy Olin) 9/29/2018

BIG YEAR cont. from page 7

It is fun to propose what might be the Top 3 Species for the year. We might consider species we saw which were new for the state or extreme rarities, such as Red-breasted Sapsucker, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and Pink-footed Goose. Worthy indeed! But these were stake-outs found by others before our trips. What about considering the DFO new lifers that we discovered on DFO trips as our Top 3 species? For this I propose White Ibis, Red Knot and Gunnison Sage-Grouse. However, you put it together, we found great birds.

Great Adventure

DFO held 230 free, public field trips in 2018. This averages out to one trip every 1.6 days. Remarkable! And we went just about everywhere. DFO reached out statewide in a strong way for the first time, visiting 54 Colorado counties and adding 19 new counties for DFO. This leaves only 10 counties yet to be visited by DFO trips. We had 18 overnight field trips, including one that was four days long, and three that included camping. The ring of overnight stops on DFO trips in 2018 included Craig, Grand Junction (twice), Montrose, Salida, the Uncompahgre Plateau, Cortez, Trinidad, La Junta, Cottonwood Canyon, Lamar, Burlington, Sterling (three times), and Walden.

The Big Year was a great opportunity for many members to visit new places, like State Wildlife Areas, sewage lagoons, reservoirs, distant hot spots, towns, cemeteries, groves and canyons. We learned to appreciate different areas and understand better the rhythms of the bird year,

bird habitats, and how to bird in the places we all hear about but haven't been to yet.

Great Contributions

DFO submitted eBird checklists for all of its trips, totaling 1,621 checklists for 2018. That is nearly 50 percent of all the checklists ever submitted by DFO trips. These include visits to remote and seldom-reported locations and counties that are "under-birded". Many of our eBird lists have rare birds and others supported by great photos or recordings from our participants.

Participation

Our trips were led by 42 DFO leaders! And these were supported often by regional experts who helped in planning and sometimes finding the birds. Six DFO leaders led 10 or more field trips in 2018! And there were hundreds who participated in the trips. Some invested a lot of time in the field trips, joining many and having a very rich experience of the year. Others came on DFO trips for the first time and some new members joined DFO in association with their Big Year experience.

Fun

My best memories of the Big Year, I'm sure shared by all who took part, was the great fun and camaraderie among the participants. DFO field trips attract a diverse group of interesting, kind and helpful people – and many great birders. And that, more than anything else, was priceless.

Book Review: Gulls Simplified? Not Really

Gulls Simplified:

A Comparative Approach to Identification

By Pete Dunne (Princeton University Press)

207 pages, paperback. \$24.95

By Nicholas Komar

I love gulls. Four species are common in our state: California, Ring-billed, Herring and Franklin's. Another 17 species, including the Black-legged Kittiwake, have been seen in Colorado. Some of these species are rare. One aspect of gulls that I love is their ability to fly such long distances. This means that, on occasion, we see a gull from halfway around the world soaring across our Colorado skies.

Are we prepared to recognize the odd vagrant gull if it does appear? Most birders understand that the common field guides are inadequate for identifying certain gulls. My favorite field guide, the *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, is commendable for presenting up to 13 different drawings of a species. But, even Sibley's treatment does not adequately review the range of variation seen in some gulls (like the Herring Gull). Advanced birders have invested in additional reference books for gull identification, such as Howell and Dunn's *Gulls of the Americas* (2007) or Olsen and Larsson's *Gulls of North America, Europe and Asia* (2004). A new reference book for gull identification is now available for your larid ID library: *Gulls Simplified, A Comparative Approach to Identification* by Pete Dunne (not to be confused with gull expert and author Jon Dunn) and Kevin T. Karlson, published in 2019 by Princeton University Press.

This book relies heavily on photographs to depict the various plumages of 23 species of gulls that occur regularly in the USA. I call this a "reference book" because at 8 inches by 10 inches it is too large to fit in your pocket. However, it is rather thin at 207 pages and a light 30 ounces or so, and can easily be tossed into the back seat of your vehicle for easy access in the field.

For some reason, gull identification gives many birders nightmares, more so even than sparrows, shorebirds,

fall warblers, and *Empidonax* flycatchers. Perhaps it is because some individual gulls, usually immatures, cannot be identified to the species level. Or, maybe it is because plumages can vary greatly within a species like Herring Gull, which can take up to 5 years to reach breeding plumage. Or, because gulls frequently hybridize, producing mutts that are tricky to identify. Pete Dunne, an expert birder, is a self-proclaimed gull hater for these same reasons and claims to have written this book (Dunne did most of the writing, while Karlson provided most of the photographs) for other birders like him who don't need to delve into the intricacies of feather molt cycles to be able to identify most gulls.

While this book is very much a reference book, with a chapter dedicated to each of the featured gull species, I started at the beginning with the 20-page Introduction, which was well illustrated with 68 different photos. I didn't really get how the approach taken in this book is simpler than any of the other books on gull identification. Certainly, the species accounts are extremely detailed and lengthy, and rival the species accounts in other books. For example, the account for Laughing Gull features 31 photos plus a range map. Given that Laughing Gull is usually a straightforward identification, these authors do not treat it in a "simplified" manner. And that is fine by me, because I think the more one delves into the details, the more gull identification becomes clear.

Other species accounts are equally detailed, with the number of images ranging from eight photos for Heermann's Gull to 47 for Herring Gull. For six species, the chapters are less detailed than I would have preferred. This includes the Yellow-footed Gull (seven images), Red-legged Kittiwake (four images), and four species of "Dark Horse Gulls," which are so rare they are unlikely to be encountered by most birders in North America: Slaty-backed Gull (five images), Kelp Gull (four images), Black-tailed Gull (two images), and Ross's Gull (six images). I found this to be unfortunate, because I reached for this reference when I had questions about rare vagrants, like which subspecies of Black-legged Kittiwake was I seeing at Horsetooth Reservoir in December of 2018 and what proportion of adult Slaty-backed Gulls lack the "string of pearls" pattern of subterminal white spots in the 5th-7th primary flight feathers of the outer wing. I could not find answers to these questions in this book.

Continued on page 10

The issue of subspecies is important as several gulls that occur in Colorado can appear differently depending on the source population. For example, during migration Colorado hosts a few members of the paler-mantled, northern-breeding subspecies of California Gull, also known as Alberta Gull (*Larus californicus albertaensis*) in addition to the locally breeding, darker-mantled subspecies (*L. c. californicus*). Both the larger eastern version of Glaucous Gull (*L. hyperboreus palidissima*) and the smaller western version (*L. h. barrovianus*) occur in Colorado during winter. Most Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*L. fuscus*) that occur in Colorado are of the northern European *graellsii* population, but are we prepared to identify an intermedium, which is occasionally reported from the East Coast or a *heuglini* from the West Coast? Or a Siberian Herring Gull (*L. argentatus vegae*), which probably occurs in our state annually in winter? Unfortunately, the only subspecies adequately treated in this book pertain to the Iceland Gull complex. The two North American subspecies of Iceland Gull, i.e. Thayer's Gull (*L. glaucoides thayeri*) and Kumlien's Gull (*L. g. kumlieni*), are described in separate in-depth chapters.

One nice feature of the book is a two-page spread that compares photographic portraits of 22 species of gull

in adult plumage scaled to size. Only the Black-tailed Gull is missing. The next page shows the same spread as silhouettes, which highlights the differences in shape and structure among the gulls. Two pages are dedicated to map the anatomical parts on the surface of a gull. A glossary of terms is provided as well as an index for quick reference. Three pages are dedicated to a brief description of five classes of hybrid gulls including nine photos. While the authors should be commended for including a section on gull hybrids, the authors admit to lacking experience with western hybrids. Lastly, the authors have included 43 quiz photos with detailed answers/analysis at the back of the book, which provides for a little fun.

While *Gulls Simplified* may not answer all your gull identification questions, it provides one more reference book for consultation and complements the other gull ID books already available. The quality of the photos is superb, and the color of the photos looks spot on, which is not true for many of the photos in Howell and Dunn's book. Relative to the other books already mentioned (and out-of-print), the retail price \$24.95 for the paperback of *Gulls Simplified* is a bargain and I recommend adding it to your collection.

Welcome to new DFO members

Mary Anne Braymer, Denver; Kara Clark, Denver; Kathryn Dunleavy and Chuck Dunleavy, Denver; Virginia Gulakowski, Centennial; Julia Gwinn, Littleton; Jannet Jamison, Golden; Allen Adinoff and Mary Klinnert, Greenwood Village; Sue Knight, Denver; Michael Lamson, Boulder; Deborah Lind, Englewood; Scott Manwaring, Littleton; Jean McClenathen, Lakewood; Julie Morton, Golden; David and Tresa Moulton, Steamboat Springs; Jodi Chambers and Sally Palmer, Denver; Cedric Pereira, Denver; Sue Riffe, Lyons; Matthew Rodgers, Centennial; Kris Saucke, Centennial; Irvin Savidge, Arvada; Fred J. Scherrer Jr. and Dennis Scherrer, Denver; Jennifer and Jonathan Schneider, Denver; Lynne Scholfield, Denver; Diana Tomback, Denver; Sherry and Ted Uhlemann, Littleton; Ken Wat, Aurora; Larry Wiberg, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Tom Pool and Kitsi Atkinson, Jane Axtell, Diane Birks, Mark Peyton and Susan Blansett, Robert Trout and Jill Boice, Ann Bonnell, Renee and Dan Brachear, Sally Polk and Catherine Carr, Linda and C. Raymond Clark, Doris Cruze, Jeff Dawson, Laurie Duke, Jim Esten, Newell Grant, Sonja and Grace Hahn, Georgia Hart, J.B. Hayes, David Hennes, Tim and Candice Johnson, Mary Keithler, Kristina Koff, Phoenix Kwan, Rebecca Laroche, Linda MacIntyre, Kara Spitler and Robert Martinez, Lynne Miller, Claire Montour, Julie Morton, Michael Wilson and Barbara Nabors, Mary Fran O'Connor, Jodi Chambers and Sally Palmer, Pat and Barney Poole, Polly Reetz, Diane Roberts, Peggy Roberts, Joe Roller, Niña Routh, Lynne Scholfield, Micki and Bob Shade, Lori Sharp, Sondra Bland and Bob Spencer, Kathleen Stewart, Bob and Nancy Stocker, Peter Stoltz, Sue Summers, Ashley Thompson, Diana Tomback, Ronald Villiotti, Jan Justice Waddington, Elaine Wagner, Lowell Baumunk and Peggy Wait, Ken Wat, Robert and Allison Waters, Laura and Wayne Wathen, Karen and John Weslar, Joan and Jack Whiting, Robyn Winick and Jeremy Winick, Scott Yarberry, Mary Zick

February Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. March field trips will appear on the website on February 1.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Northeastern Raptor Tour Saturday, February 2 6:30 AM - 6:30 PM

Joey Kellner
Email: vireo1@comcast.net
Phone: 303-978-1748
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 N Broadway.

Bring lunch for a full day of driving and watching raptors in the northeastern Colorado. Limited to three vehicles.

Joder Ranch Saturday, February 9 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark
Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Interim Border Trailhead on the west side of US36 about 3.2 miles north of the Broadway intersection.

This is a moderate to difficult half-day hike of 2 miles each direction (4 miles total). Expect a variety of foothills and ponderosa pine birds.

First Creek at RM Arsenal Sunday, February 10 7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

We'll look for raptors and the usual cottonwood-prairie ecosystem birds, overwintering sparrows and songbirds, waterfowl in the creek and perhaps an owl or two. Expect to walk 3-4 miles on mostly level trail and pavement. Scopes may be helpful in ID'ing distant hawks and eagles. No restrooms at this location; "go before you go" at the King Soopers off Tower Road in nearby Green Valley Ranch (1.5 miles).

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, February 10 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

Park County Explorations Monday, February 11 6:30 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at King Soopers in Aspen Park off Highway 285 at 25637 Conifer Road. Meet at the south side of the parking lot overlooking Hwy 285.

This trip will likely focus on the northeastern part of Park County, checking for birds of forests and feeders, birding along roadsides with an eye for possible Rosy-Finches, grosbeaks, Canada Jays, and more. We may go up to South Park to Jefferson and other towns. Cold temps may shorten our day.

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76 Saturday, February 16 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mark Amershek
Email: mammershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and S. Platte River Trail.

We will see lots of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trail and occasionally in the adjacent mud for up to 3 miles.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County) Sunday, February 17 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger
Email: mcburger3@juno.com
Phone: 720-940-8394
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

February Field Trips Continued...

Directions: Enter the east side of Cherry Creek State Park via Lehigh off of Parker Road. Go just past the entrance station and turn left (south) at the first intersection. The parking for Pelican Point will be on your left. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for eagles, gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Scopes are useful.

Southeastern Colorado Monday, February 18 4:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 8
Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Avenue and Yosemite (1 mile west of I-25 on the north side of Lincoln), Lone Tree, CO. This trip will focus on Otero County, and maybe neighboring Crowley and Bent Counties. We will visit reservoirs, fields, SWA's, cattle lots, wetlands, and the lovely Higbee region. Geese and waterfowl, bluebirds, and probably a surprise or two. Plan for a full exciting day with long drives to and from.

Barr Lake Periphery Saturday, February 23 12:15 PM - 4:00 PM

Tammy Sanders & Ira Sanders
Email: amkestral@gmail.com
Phone: 303-278-7172
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet on the access road to entrance station at Barr Lake State Park. State Parks pass NOT required.

We will drive country roads around Barr Lake with several stops along the way, looking for raptors,

sparrows and other prairie birds. This trip is especially suited for persons with limited mobility. If you are interested in a full day of birding, join Tammy and Ira for the morning bird walk at Barr Lake Nature Center 9am.

Denver City Park (Denver County) Sunday, February 24

7:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake in City Park. Park diagonally on left beneath spruces.

Double-crested Cormorants begin returning this month to the park's Duck Lake island nesting colony. We'll check in on the first arrivals for DFO's Colonial Waterbirds citizen science project and survey the park for other early spring migrants as well as winter and year-round residents. Bring a scope if you have one. Expect about 3 miles of easy walking on level ground and park paths.

Larimer County Monday, February 25 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Dale Pate & Diane Roberts
Email: dalepate@gmail.com
Phone: 575-706-4584
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 N Broadway.

We will determine best locations to visit as we get closer to the trip, but reservoirs, parks and other habitats in Larimer County will be likely targets. If there are rarities being seen we may try for them. Plan to carpool from our meeting spot.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Tuesday, February 26 7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch and Deer Creek Canyon. We will look for signs of spring, especially early nesting activity by raptors. Plan for some short, easy walks, and some driving to nearby spots.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@gmail.com
Will Burt (2021)	willburt43@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2019)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Vacant	
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Will Burt, Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
----------------------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

January 28, 2019
Dave Leatherman
*The Natural Wonders
of Southern Colorado*

February 25, 2019
Steve Jones
Swan Lakes

March 25, 2019
Ted Floyd

April 22, 2019
Nathan Pieplow

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 60
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MARCH 2019/VOL 55 NO 3

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)



Trumpeter Swan family at 10-mile Lake
(Credit: Steve Jones)

Monthly Programs

DFO monthly programs are held at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd, Denver. Programs begin at 7 PM.

Monday, February 25
Nebraska's Swan Lakes
Steve Jones

Detailed maps of western Nebraska show four separate bodies of water, each called "Swan Lake." Boulder environmental consultant and author Steve Jones will share the story of the disappearance of swans from these lakes and their reappearance 80 years later.

Jones holds master's degrees from Boston University in U.S. social and environmental history and from Stanford University in secondary teaching. He is the author of *The Last Prairie*, *a Sandhills Journal* and *Owls of Boulder County*. He is co-author of *The Shortgrass Prairie*, *Peterson Field Guide to the North American Prairie*, *Colorado Nature Almanac*, *Wild Boulder County*, and *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*. Jones' consulting work includes more than three-dozen breeding bird and resource inventories for city, county, and state open space and wildlife programs. He has led field trips and taught nature classes for 35 years and he taught in the Boulder Valley Public Schools for 33 years.

Monday, March 25
Why We Bird
Ted Floyd

Many birds are colorful and some are brilliant. Their songs can be enchanting. Their migrations are often stirring. And they can FLY, for crying out loud. Those are all amazing avian attributes, but are they really what attract us to birdwatching? While all of those may be part of the appeal, Boulder County birder and author Ted Floyd thinks there's something grander, deeper, and more beautiful about birdwatching. Join us for the March DFO program to hear what's on the mind of the Editor of *Birding* magazine and managing editor of *North American Birds*.



Ted Floyd

Special Programs in March!

Saturday, March 23, 9 AM – 12 PM (classroom session)

Sunday, April 28, 8 AM -10:30 AM (field session)

Fundamentals of Passerine Identification

Meredith McBurney

Fee: \$25

This month, DFO launches a series of workshops and learning events. Advance registration is necessary because some events require a fee or can accommodate only a limited number of participants. Registration is easy on the [DFO website](#). Go to the Programs tab and select *Special Programs & Workshops* from the drop-down menu. Then click on *Details & Registration* and select the program you want to register for. Supply the needed information and click on *Register*.

There are approximately 175 birds classified as Passerines that can be seen in Colorado sometime during any year. Add in some rarities, and that's a lot of species to sort out. Join Meredith McBurney, long-time bander for the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, for this two-part workshop. Group size limited to 25 participants. The fee covers all materials including access to the banding station for the field session. NOTE: Members will be notified via email when registration via the website is open.

The classroom session will combine lecture, exercises and small group activities to help you improve your ability to identify these relatively small, usually active birds. The field session will be held at the Chatfield State Park bird banding station. It will be an opportunity to study what you learned in the classroom on real birds up close. This workshop is suitable for intermediate to advanced birders who would like to sharpen their identification skills.

Saturday, March 30, 1-3 PM

Belmar Library, Lakewood

Raptor Identification Challenges

Brian K. Wheeler, author, photographer, & illustrator

Join author/illustrator Brian K. Wheeler for a talk and conversation about raptor identification challenges. The program is free and attendance is limited to 68 people. Registration is now open on the DFO web site.

The program will be moderated by Ira Sanders and Chuck Hundertmark. Registered participants will be invited to submit specific questions in advance, and the moderators will engage Brian in a conversation using those questions submitted. There will be additional time for questions from the audience and a book signing at the end.

Wheeler is a trucker from Firestone, CO, though you probably don't recognize his name from a truck-stop meeting. Wheeler illustrated *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America* in the Peterson field guide series. He is also a photographer whose work is included in *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*. Both books were written by William S. Clark.

Wheeler is author of his own raptor reference works as well. He has illustrated *Raptors of Eastern North America: The Wheeler Guides* and *Raptors of Western North America: The Wheeler Guides* with his own photos of raptors in all plumages. These guides offer species accounts with encyclopedic details on molts, subspecies, and behaviors of the hawks, eagles, and falcons we love to watch.

In 2018, Wheeler distilled his extensive knowledge of raptors into *Birds of Prey of the West* and a companion eastern volume. These two field guides are packed with information on raptors and Brian's illustrations. You can find his books at The Tattered Cover, Boulder Book Store, and Barnes and Noble, as well as online.

January Program Review

By Tim Johnson

On Jan. 28, a large crowd braved newly fallen snow to attend David Leatherman's presentation *Natural Wonders of Southeastern Colorado*. Leatherman has lived in Colorado for more than 40 years. He is retired from the Colorado State Forest Service, where he served as the forest entomologist. His talk was a spirited celebration of the great biodiversity of this area, which encompasses roughly 10 counties.

Leatherman defined southeastern Colorado in the following way: draw a line on a map between Pueblo, CO and Kanorado, KS. The area between this line, Interstate 25, and Colorado's borders is southeastern Colorado. At one time it was mostly shortgrass prairie. Now the dominant plants are corn and wheat. Averaging 10-15 inches of rain a year, it has historically been an area of extremes: locust plagues in the 19th century, severe dust storms in the 1930s and 1950s, routine three-digit temperatures in summer, and the possibility of massive snowstorms in winter.

The area is sparsely populated and sits at the intersection of mountain and plains with no significant geographic barriers to the south and east. Close to 400 bird species have been recorded here, most of the state's 17,000 insect species live here, and it is the best area in the state for reptiles and amphibians. Historically a refuge for Bison, it provides habitat for Elk, Pronghorn Antelope, and Bighorn Sheep, as well as interesting smaller mammals like the Kit Fox. There are also recent records of Nine-banded Armadillos near the town of Lamar.

Leatherman adorned his talk with abundant photographs, anecdotes and sometimes hilarious commentary. I urge readers to watch the video on the DFO website at this link: <https://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>. Here are a few items I found most engaging.

Reptiles and amphibians: Leatherman shared photos of about eight snakes. The most dramatic was the Coachwhip, an 8-foot-long, reddish snake that is extremely fast and has an aggressive temperament. He recalled an encounter in which a Coachwhip reared up like a cobra and watched a circling flock of cliff swallows, hoping for one to come too close. Leatherman discussed whether bullfrogs could be considered native to southeastern Colorado and showed a stunning image of the Great Plains Toad. This softball-sized amphibian looked as if I could

have inspired Jabba the Hutt, the *Star Wars* character. I learned that there are three species of horned lizards in southeastern Colorado and that the Yellow Mud Turtle is very fragrant, though not in a way that would interest Chanel.

Insects and other invertebrates: Leatherman has identified several insect species previously unknown in Colorado, including the Kiowa Two-Bearded Spider Wasp. Only 20 specimens of this insect exist and all are from Lamar. He mentioned that several butterfly species get blown into southeast Colorado from the south, including the Blackwitch with its impressive 4-inch wingspan. An onlooker admonished him not to pick one of these up since it looked like a bat! He shared an image of a hefty, flightless Lubber Grasshopper eating roadkill – who knew a grasshopper could do that? He also noted that Robber Flies are the insect equivalent of flycatchers. Spiders got their due in the form of tarantulas and their Tarantula Hawk predators. There are at least three to five species in Colorado.

Birds: Leatherman gave examples of birds considered rarities in southeastern Colorado now but perhaps regular in the future. Among those on this list are Inca Dove, Zone-Tailed Hawk, and hummingbirds familiar to southern Arizona such as the Magnificent and Broad-billed. Colorado's first confirmed nest of the Mississippi Kite was in La Junta. Stray and migrant species from the east and southwest are to be expected, including Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch and many eastern warblers. He showed an arresting photo of a Greater Roadrunner in flight. It looked to me like the [Hoatzin](#), an unusual South American native. Species considered unusual in the Denver area are often found in abundance in the southeast. In winter, birders can see flocks of 100,000 white geese, up to 40 percent of which are Ross' Geese.

To explore southeastern Colorado, Leatherman suggested a route that begins in Limon and proceeds to Lamar and then to Springfield, Kim, and Grenada before returning to Limon. Late April to early May is prime time, but Leatherman actually prefers to go in the fall, when migration is more drawn out. Inspection of this route on a map suggests many possible intriguing detours. You can expect very few stoplights, few birders, a visible horizon, and a landscape conducive to wanderlust. Be prepared for anything and support the local economy by spending money in the towns.



City Nature Challenge 2019: April 26 to May 5

By Kent Schnacke

Do you like taking pictures with your phone or camera? Do you like contributing valuable data to the scientific community? If you answered yes, then you're going to love the City Nature Challenge.

The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is an ongoing project to document urban biodiversity and engage city residents in the nature around them. The project is framed as a competition among cities to see which can make the most observations, identify the most species, or have the most participants. The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles and the California Academy of Sciences began the program in 2016 as a competition between Los Angeles and San Francisco. This year more than 120 cities on six continents will participate in the challenge. You can learn more about the program on the [CNC website](#).

Participants in 11 Colorado counties will compete in this year's Boulder-Denver Metro Area City Nature Challenge, which runs between April 26 and May 5. Participants will collect observations for the first four days, April 26-29, then ID and verify their findings from April 30 to May 5. The challenge encompasses Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park counties. Any and all in these counties can participate. You can find all the details on the [iNaturalist website](#) for Boulder-Denver Metro Area.

Participants will use the free [iNaturalist](#) app or website to record the plants, animals, and fungi they observe. Use the app to quickly and easily take a picture of your observation and upload it to the Boulder-Denver Metro Area CNC project. (You can also upload camera photos to the website via computer.) The app automatically records the time and location of the observation, which are vital details for scientists and land managers. Identify what you see if you can. The app includes a feature that will analyze your photo and suggest possible identifications. If you don't know what it is, the community of nature enthusiasts on iNaturalist will work together to identify what you observed.

There are many ways to get involved:

- Spread the word! Post on social media, distribute posters or flyers, tell your friends. The more you promote the CNC, the more successful it will be.
- Host an event! It could range from a full-day "bioblitz" to a nature hike or a lunch break scavenger hunt. Creative possibilities are endless.
- Help make IDs! We can only count observations toward our project if they are identified down to the species level by midnight May 5. If you have knowledge in certain taxonomic groups, we'll need your help as the observations roll in.
- Make some observations! Whenever you're outside between April 26-29 – hiking, walking the dog, even taking out the trash – pause a moment to observe nature around you. You might discover something you've never noticed before.

For more information, contact Kent Schnacke at Colorado Parks and Wildlife-Resource Stewardship at kent.schnacke@state.co.us.

DFO-funded Research Project Explores Cattle-Raptor Connection on NE Colorado Shortgrass Prairie

By Patrick O'Driscoll

Eighty years ago this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture established the [Central Plains Experimental Range \(CPER\)](#) in northeastern Colorado to study range management strategies and long-term effects of livestock on grassland wildlife and ecosystems. With help from a Denver Field Ornithologists science grant, two Colorado researchers are now exploring what effect cattle grazing may have on the nesting success of four raptor species in the area.

In [Assessing Relationships between the Presence of Cattle and the Abundance and Productivity of Northeastern Colorado Raptors](#), researchers James F. Dwyer of EDM International and Angela M. Dwyer of Bird Conservancy of the Rockies may be finding evidence that grazing of cattle on the shortgrass prairie improves conditions for three of Colorado's "Tier-1 species of greatest conservation need" – Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, and Swainson's Hawk – if cattle density is carefully controlled.

They base this preliminary finding on monitoring, from 2015 through 2018, of 38 nests of those three species plus Great Horned Owls. Although the sample sizes have been small, the research data suggest that birds of prey produce more offspring per nest on the experimental range when they nest in pastures occupied by cattle. The researchers theorize that if longer-term study bears similar results, it may be a sign that pastures with grazing cattle are home to more insects and other small-mammal prey than pastures without livestock, perhaps because of nutrient cycling via manure left as cattle graze.

The Dwyers' research aims to further our understanding of how birds of prey in non-urban Colorado cope with human activity such as ranching. Such insight is important to managing and conserving these raptors and the ecosystems they inhabit. This work was funded in part by a 2018 grant from DFO's Research, Education and Conservation Fund.



Great Horned Owl young

The Dwyers searched for and found the nests at sites across the experimental range, a 15,500-acre expanse of more than 70 fenced pastures on the western edge of [Pawnee National Grassland](#). Although research on this range historically has focused mainly on adaptive grazing, CPER has also yielded important data on connections between grazing and native wildlife. Mountain Plovers, in particular, have been the focus of substantial study there over the past decade.

Although raptor nest numbers have varied between 11 and seven in the study years, the proportion of nests that produced young was relatively consistent – 12 out of 18 nests successful where cattle were present, vs. nine out of 17 successful in pastures without cattle. Productivity was higher, too: Nests in occupied pastures fledged 22 young, while nests in those with no cattle fledged just 10.

The researchers plan another year of on-the-ground study, after which more in-depth analysis will compare nesting success and productivity to the presence of cattle, including the number of livestock in an area. Having seen some nest failures after hailstorms and other inclement late spring weather, the Dwyers also plan to include factors of climate in their comparisons and analyses.

Continued on page 6



RESEARCH PROJECT cont. from page 5

Ultimately, their longer-term work aims to serve two key purposes:

- To build on CPER’s overall program with applicable “lessons learned” for grazing practices beyond the experimental range, and
- To contribute basic knowledge of raptor populations, especially the abundance, productivity, richness and survival of those throughout eastern Colorado, where CPER lessons are most widely applied.

Recently fledged and banded Golden Eagles

Welcome to new DFO members

Terri Allen, Aurora; Charles Chase, Denver; Nancy Donovan, Highlands Ranch; James Doxon and Sarah Doxon, Golden; Allison Hilf, Aurora; Barbara Isaac, Lakewood; Stacy Johnson, Lakewood; Brady Landry, Denver; Senja and Mark Meiklejohn, Littleton; Ian Redfield, Denver; Lisa McDonald and John Vickery, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Emily Braker, Karel Buckley, Tom and Mary Cay Burger, Carol Cochran, Troy and Tammy and Edward Donnan, Patricia Flood, Janet and A.J. Gest, Fionn and Kristin Gruebmeyer, Kristine Haglund, Sandra Hansen, Holly Heuer, Allison Hilf, Tina Jones, Ed and Pat Joy, Rex McGehee, Senja and Mark Meiklejohn, Janet Shin, Paul Slingsby, Jerry Tinianow and Sharon Tinianow, Bobbi Vollmer, Suzanne and Bill Wuerthele

March: What birds to look for and where

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

By Ira Sanders

In March, the average high in Denver is 58 degrees and the average low is 29, which one source indicates is a rise of six degrees and three degrees from what I reported just 10 years ago. March is the snowiest month of year and I'm sure that all of us who were here in March 2003 remember the three-day blizzard that dumped six feet of snow in Evergreen, more than four feet in Golden and three feet in parts of Denver.

The marshes of Colorado start to come alive with the beginnings of the spring thaw. Ducks and Sandhill Cranes start congregating by the thousands at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge in the lower San Luis Valley in mid- to late March. The Plum Creek and South Platte River deltas at Chatfield State Park, as well as Cherry Creek State Park in Arapahoe County, become more active as the thaw takes hold. It remains to be seen what effect the construction at Chatfield will have.

These are also good places for early shorebirds. Southeast plains reservoirs such as John Martin west of Lamar, Neenoshe and Neegrande north of Lamar, and Bonny State Wildlife Area north of Burlington are also good places for gathering ducks, geese and early shorebirds. The west end of the water line at John Martin can be especially good for shorebirds though access can be difficult.

Waterfowl are not the only birds gathering on the marshes. Marsh Wrens and Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds start setting up housekeeping. Western, Horned and Eared Grebes are also present. Be aware that the Horned and Eared Grebes can be in both basic and alternate plumages.

In Boulder County, Sombrero Marsh south of Arapahoe at 55th is a great spot if it has water. Walden Ponds and Sawhill Ponds are good places for returning Tree Swallows, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, and Greater Scaup. The latter can be a challenge to identify.

In March 1997, there was a Tufted Duck at Cottonwood Marsh at Walden Pond. Walden and Sawhill Ponds are west of 75th north of Valmont and south of Boulder Creek. While you're in the area, walk Boulder Creek west from 75th for Eastern Bluebirds, waterfowl and a possible Winter Wren.

In Weld County, Lower Latham Reservoir is a good place for marsh birds and returning teal and other waterfowl. Shorebirds can be found on the south side of CR 48 at the south end of Lower Latham. But a word of warning: some of the locals seem to consider CR 48 their own private speedway and will speed up, drive close and see how much dust they can kick up. They are also not above honking horns as they go by. So far, although this is a public road and there is no prohibition against parking on the road, the sheriff's department doesn't seem interested in doing anything about it.

Directly south of Lower Latham on CR 44 and 42, areas of Beebee Draw can also be good for shorebirds and waterfowl. On CR 57 north of CR 50 east of Lower Latham is Loloff Reservoir, a magnet for shorebirds and waterfowl.

Good numbers of Snow Geese can be seen at the plains reservoirs, but if you really want an experience, go to central Nebraska from late February to early April when hundreds of thousands of Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese and White-fronted Geese gather. If you are really lucky, a pair of Whooping Cranes may even show up. I've read that 80 percent of all the cranes on the planet pass through Nebraska. In March 1999, a Common Crane was mixed in with the half million or so Sandhill Cranes that migrated through central Nebraska that year. The area around Kearny and Gibbon is especially good for this spectacle.

Gulls, everyone's favorite challenge, will still be around and feasting off the winter fish kill. To make it more interesting, you will find a mix of basic and alternate

Continued on page 8



Top: Sandhill Cranes (Credit: Jim Esten)
Bottom: Western Screech Owl (Credit: Cathy Olin)

WHAT BIRDS cont. from page 7

plumages. Any of the lakes along the Front Range or eastern Colorado are a good place to practice your gull ID skills.

This is also the time of year when you will notice a change from wintering species to nesting species. The Chipping Sparrows return to take the place of Tree Sparrows. Swainson's Hawks return to take the place of Rough-legged Hawks. Loggerhead Shrikes replace Northern Shrikes around the state.

March and April are prime time for chickens, Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens to be exact, which can be seen on the prairies of Colorado. This is also the time to see Greater Sage Grouse near Walden, Gunnison Sage Grouse near Gunnison, and Sharp-tailed Grouse near Craig. An article by Carol Blackard in the March 2009 issue of *The Lark Bunting* had lots of information about how to see these elusive and threatened/endangered birds. You can read the article on the [website](#) where past issues of the newsletter are archived.

I'd like to thank Joey Kellner, Larry Semo, Nick Komar, Dave Leatherman, and Loch Kilpatrick for their past contributions to this month's column.

CORRECTION

On page 7 of the January 2019 issue of *The Lark Bunting* Piming Kuo's excellent photo of an immature Swainson's Hawk was inadvertently identified as a Prairie Falcon. The prominent malar markings of the young Swainson's Hawk can sometimes lead to mistaking it for a falcon.

March Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. April field trips will appear on the website on March 1.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Second Creek Open Space (Commerce City/Adams County) Sunday, March 3

6:45 AM - 11 AM
Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at Buffalo Mesa trailhead parking off Kittredge Street.

This location is north of Rocky Mountain Arsenal and west of DIA. It is home to prairie songbirds, raptors, and 20-plus other Plains species. Expect to walk 3-plus miles on level trail, with some bushwhacking through grass and weeds.

Belmar Historic Park Saturday, March 9 8 AM - 11 AM

Chuck Hundertmark
Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Belmar Historic Park is at 800 S Wadsworth Blvd in Lakewood. Meet in the parking lot near the lake.

This will be an easy walk around the ponds to check for early colonial waterbird arrivals such as Double-crested Cormorants and Great Blue Herons. Scopes helpful.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, March 10
9 AM - Noon
Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most important habitats found in the park over a distance of 3 miles. Trails can be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

Northeastern Colorado Monday, March 11 5 AM - 7 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N Broadway.

This trip will focus on birding Phillips, Sedgwick and Logan counties. In addition, we will visit Jumbo Reservoir and maybe some other big reservoirs. Scopes will be helpful. Plan for a full day with long drives. Bring a lunch.

Bar CCC Wednesday, March 13 7:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Tim Ryan & Diane Roberts
Email: Tryan4thebirds@yahoo.com
Phone: 720-545-5084
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Bar CCC Park, 10951 S. Twenty Mile Road, Parker, CO

We will bird around the pond. Parker Water Department provides us with

a short bus to ride to our next stop: Rueter-Hess Reservoir. Scopes will be helpful.

Staunton State Park (Jefferson County)

Saturday, March 16
8 AM - 3 PM
Mark Amershek
Email: mammershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Park-n-Ride at southwest corner of Hampden (CO 285) and Wadsworth to carpool to the park. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a moderate hike of 2-4 miles with potential for short, steep inclines. Habitat can include ponderosa pines, aspen, mountain riparian, meadows, and cliffs. Species may include a variety of woodpeckers, nuthatches, raptors and possible migrants. All levels of birders welcome.

First Creek at Denver Open Space Sunday, March 17

7:30 AM - Noon
Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From Denver take 1-70 to Peña Blvd. exit. Drive north toward airport and exit at 56th Ave. Turn left at stoplight and go west under Peña overpasses. Parking lot is 2 blocks ahead on right.

Expect to see an array of raptors, songbirds, woodpeckers and more. There are no restrooms at this location, so "go before you go" at the King Soopers off Tower Road and 48th in nearby Green Valley Ranch.

March Field Trips Continued...

South-Central Colorado

Monday, March 18

5 AM - 7 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

This trip will explore Huerfano and Custer counties. We will seek a variety of waterbirds and hints of spring as we range from the prairie to the mountains. Bring lunch.

Broomfield County

Tuesday, March 19

7 AM - 1 PM

Dale Pate

Email: dalepate@gmail.com

Phone: 575-706-4584

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: We will meet at Broomfield Community Park, located north of W. 120th Ave and east of Main Street. We will park in slanted parking spots along Community Park Road to the west of the Broomfield Library.

We will visit several birding hotspots throughout the morning. Depending on the time and bird activity, we may venture into nearby Boulder and Jefferson counties. We will walk 1-3 miles on mostly level ground.

Wray Chamber Greater Prairie-Chicken

Saturday, March 23

to Sunday, March 24

9 AM - 5 PM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 24

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 N Broadway.

NOTE: This is a 2-day trip. The Wray Chamber of Commerce offers Greater Prairie-Chicken tours in that include orientation on the first night, viewing early the next morning in a blind, and a ranch breakfast afterwards. Hotel reservations must be made for the night of March 23rd. Cost is \$100. Register at: <https://wraychamber.net/events/#!event/2019/3/23/greater-prairie-chicken-tour-2> Limited to 24 participants. Contact leader for further information.

Cañon City

Sunday, March 24

6 AM - 5 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mammershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Safeway at 9229 East Lincoln Ave, Lone Tree, Co 80124.

We can expect to see Scaled Quail, Canyon Wren, Rock Wren, and Mountain Bluebirds. We hope to see Juniper Titmouse, and Pinyon Jay. Pack a lunch.

Southeastern Colorado

Monday, March 25

4:30 AM - 7 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Avenue and Yosemite in Lone Tree, CO.

This trip will focus on Cheyenne and Kiowa Counties. We will visit Queens State Wildlife Area reservoirs in Kiowa County. Our efforts in

Cheyenne will add eBird data for this county that is seldom birded at this time of year.

Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso County)

Sunday, March 31

6 AM - 3 PM

Diane Roberts

Email: Samatha576@aol.com

Phone: 720-278-9025

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Safeway, 9229 East Lincoln Ave. Lone Tree CO 80124. Park away from the store

Fountain Creek Regional Park includes creek-side trails, ponds, Fountain Creek Nature Center and Hanson Nature Park. Bring lunch and bug spray. Plan on walking on manicured trails for approximately 3-4 miles.

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Sunday, March 31

7 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake in City Park.

We will look for large waterbirds and the first return of migrants and spring-summer residents. We will count both park lakes for the DFO Colonial Waterbirds Project but also comb the park for songbirds, woodpeckers, raptors and more. Scopes welcome for viewing cormorant nests high in the trees.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@gmail.com
Will Burt (2021)	willburt43@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2019)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Vacant	
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Will Burt, Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
----------------------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

February 25, 2019

Steve Jones

Swan Lakes

March 25, 2019

Ted Floyd

Why We Bird

April 22, 2019

Nathan Pieplow

TBD

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	25
☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	60
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$	10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

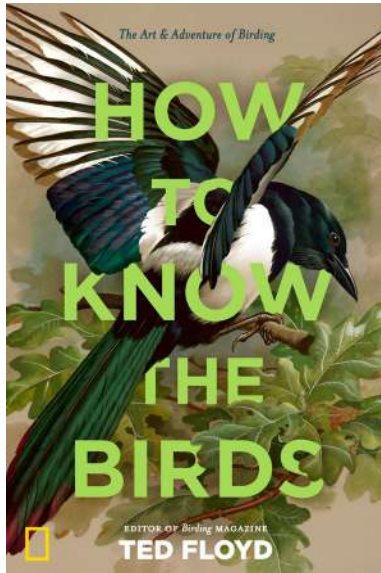
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/APRIL 2019/VOL 55 NO 4

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)



Monthly Programs

DFO monthly programs are held at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd, Denver. Programs begin at 7 PM.

Monday, March 25

Why We Bird

Ted Floyd

Many birds are colorful and some are brilliant. Their songs can be enchanting. Their migrations are often stirring. And they can FLY, for crying out loud. Those are all amazing avian attributes, but are they really what attract us to birdwatching? While all of those may be part of the appeal, Ted Floyd thinks there's something grander, deeper, and more beautiful about birdwatching. Join us for the March DFO program to hear what's on Ted's mind.

Ted Floyd is the Editor of *Birding* magazine, the award-winning flagship publication of the American Birding Association. He has written five bird books, including the *Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (HarperCollins, 2008) and the forthcoming *How to Know the Birds* (National Geographic, 2019). Floyd is also the author of more than 200 popular articles, technical papers, and book chapters on birds and nature. He is especially interested in analyzing bird vocalizations, interpreting birds and nature for children and beginners, and in applying new media and emerging technologies toward the appreciation of nature.

A graduate of Princeton University (A.B., 1990) and Penn State University (Ph.D., 1995), Floyd has taught biology, math, and statistics to a variety of ages from second graders to advanced graduate students. He and his family live in Lafayette, CO.

Follow Ted Floyd on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/BirdingMagazine> and on The ABA Blog at <http://blog.aba.org/author/ted-floyd>.

Monday, April 22

The Secret Lives of Ducks

Nathan Pieplow

Ducks are some of our most fascinating and underappreciated birds. In this talk, Nathan Pieplow, a frequent speaker at DFO and teacher in the Writing and Rhetoric Department at the University of Colorado Boulder, will introduce us to the communications systems of ducks and touch on the wilder aspects of their reproductive biology.



Nathan Pieplow

Solving Colorado's Ornithological Mysteries

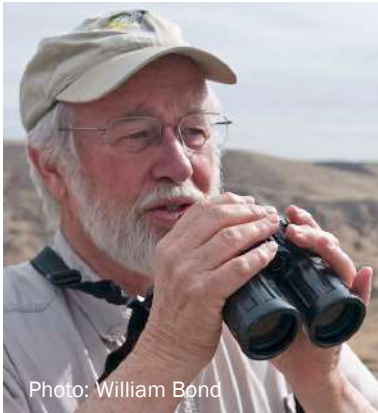


Photo: William Bond

From the President Chuck Hundertmark

In February, I received an intriguing email from Bob Righter suggesting one way to add a bit of ornithological inquiry, or bird sleuthing, to DFO field trips. Righter is a long-time DFO member and co-author of *Colorado Birds: A Reference to Their Distribution and Habitat*.

Noting that Ring-billed Gulls are found year-round in Colorado, Bob wrote, "Since the gull is so common, it is mind-boggling that it has not been recorded as a breeding species in Colorado, except for an old record from June 1898 in the San Luis Valley."

He went on to suggest that a DFO field trip might be the first to crack the Ring-billed Gull ornithological mystery by finding evidence of the species breeding. It might just be a matter of heightened awareness of what constitutes breeding evidence and the significance of that evidence on the part of DFO field trip participants.

Breeding Ring-billed Gulls would most likely be found on an island in a reservoir or lake, though river islands are also possible. A search of eBird for Colorado reservoirs where these gulls appear during the peak summer breeding months could identify potential areas. Trips to those sites could focus on finding evidence of breeding. For example, Righter suggested that the presence of juvenile birds in June or July "... would be high in the confirmation process."

Following up on information that suggests new breeding species in the state would be an extension of David Suddjian's idea for gap-filling field trips. At a DFO Trip Leader Forum, David suggested that trip leaders might schedule field trips to locations in Colorado where eBird reports are scarce or missing completely.

Righter suggested that trip leaders might find other mysteries to solve by going through the Colorado species list found on the [Colorado Field Ornithologists web site](#). Sightings in recent years of at least two other species suggest possible breeding. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons have shown up at three or more sites in eastern Colorado during the breeding season. Most intriguing were the reports from Stalker Lake last summer, including Gregg Goodrich's report from a Sept. 1 DFO field trip. The DFO observers found two immatures and an adult.

Summer reports of Neotropic Cormorants in several areas of the state in recent years have also been suggestive. Particularly interesting were last year's reports at Neenoshe Reservoir by Steven Mlodinow and others.

Perhaps this year's challenge for DFO trip leaders and birders will be donning their deerstalker hats to become bird sleuths – and in doing so, adding to our knowledge and understanding of the status of bird populations in Colorado.



Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Tabor Lake (Aug 2015)
Chuck Hundertmark

Black Swift Movement: DFO-funded Research Project Update

By Rob Sparks

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

rob.sparks@birdconservancy.org

Together with our research team, I am leading an effort in a multiyear Bird Conservancy of the Rockies project to understand the movement ecology of the Black Swift during breeding season. Our objective is to learn more about the swifts' foraging patterns and identify their daily foraging routes, both of which are unknown. This promising work is funded in part by a 2018 grant from the Denver Field Ornithologists' Research, Education and Conservation Fund.

In 2017, U.S. Forest Service biologist Kim Potter, citizen scientist Carolyn Gun, Bird Conservancy Science Director Luke George and I attached Global Positioning System (GPS) tags to five swifts at sites in western Colorado. We are now attempting to recapture these birds, a feat that will require patience and perseverance.

During a clear evening last summer, Bird Conservancy Banding Coordinator Colin Woolley and I arrived at Box Canyon State Park above the town of Ouray. We were greeted by Sue Heirshman, another devoted Black Swift conservationist. She informed us that the same nest where we had previously attached a GPS tag to an adult male was active, but she was not able to determine if the same bird with the tag had survived its long migratory trip back from South America. As the sky darkened, we discussed our recapture plans. We were eager to see if the bird with the GPS tag was on the nest.

Chattering overhead, swifts streamed in and out of the canyon as we edged along the steel walkway. Before descending to the canyon floor, we stopped to look at the nest, which sits on a knob protruding from the canyon wall. As our headlights beamed over the nest, we saw a fledgling and then an adult with an antenna sticking up from its back. We looked at each other in disbelief and excitement.

To minimize further disturbance to the birds, we switched our headlamps to red and descended. At the bottom, the sound of the crashing waterfall was deafening. We set up wildlife ladders and readied our equipment for the slow climb back up to capture the swift in a hand-held net. After our successful recapture, we removed the GPS tag, with data that will answer basic foraging questions new to science. The male swift appeared strong and healthy. After weighing him, we took a few measurements and returned the swift to his nest.

Five years before tagging these birds, we discovered the annual migratory path and wintering destination of their species in the lowland rainforests of Brazil. Since 2012, we have continued to learn more about their movement ecology (flight and foraging patterns) to help inform conservation needs.

The Black Swift spends most of its time on the wing foraging for insects. Its cryptic nature and difficult-to-access nesting locations make it one of the least understood bird species in North and Central America. It nests in remote areas on wet rock faces, in moist coastal caves or on ledges near waterfalls. Designated as a species of Continental Concern in the U.S. and Canada, the Black Swift has lost 94 percent of its population according to Breeding Bird Survey data. Unfortunately, the wider array of aerial insectivores (swallows, martins, nightjars, whip-poor-wills and flycatchers) also is experiencing steep population declines across North America. This continent-wide pattern implies that broad factors are the cause. The need to fill the information gaps is urgent.

Black Swifts are thought to forage long distances from their nests, but their basic movement ecology is unknown. Answers to foraging distance and daily foraging routes will help us identify flight patterns, foraging hotspots and habitat relationships to help with conservation planning for this species.

Continued on page 4

We retrieved a second GPS tag at Zapata Falls, in southern Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains next to Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve. In moonlight before sunrise, we began our walk upstream to the falls through a pinyon-and-juniper-scented landscape. The cold of the creek's water penetrated my waders, reeling me back and refocusing me to keep my balance as we approached the netting site. Capturing swifts at this location required a double-stacked, 21-foot-high net across the stream at the canyon entrance. We raised the nets just before sunrise as the birds foraged for moths in the moonlight. We were excited to find a bird with an antenna among the handful we captured soon after raising the nets.

We are still analyzing the data from these recovered tags, but exciting early results suggest Black Swifts travel an average of about 100 miles a day while foraging during breeding season, at an average elevation of 10,200 feet. These distances and heights exceed by far the foraging movements of most land birds.

During our recapture efforts, independent researcher Greg Levandoski, along with Woodley and me, also deployed wing activity devices on other birds to determine whether Black Swifts perform aerial roosting. This is an incredible adaptation in which swifts sleep while on the wing, spending months in the air without landing. We are now collaborating with the same team that made that aerial roosting discovery for the Common Swift, the European counterpart to the Black Swift. We hope to recapture the birds with wing-activity devices next year.

I think we are drawn to the Black Swift because it reminds us of the wild places and rugged Colorado terrain this bird inhabits. Flying over vast expanses, streams and mountains, Black Swifts represent wild and untamed nature. We love and value these places, and we hope to leave them intact for future generations to explore. The Black Swift will require our help if the species is to be a continuing part of that future.

Annual Election of Board Officers and Directors

The April 22 program at Unity Spiritual Center will begin with the annual election of officers and directors for the DFO Board. The Nominating Committee offers the following slate of candidates, which was approved by the DFO Board at its Feb. 24 meeting.

Officers of the DFO Board are elected to one-year terms:

President:	David Hill
Vice President:	Susan Blansett
Treasurer:	Sue Summers
Secretary:	Debbie James
Membership Chair:	Mary Cay Burger

Directors of the DFO Board are nominated to three-year terms:

Tom Behnfield	Finance Committee Chair
Chris Goulart	Grants Committee Chair

Two additional director positions are open and the Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for those positions (*see Volunteer Opportunities with DFO on page 7*).

Denver Area's HawkWatch Needs Volunteers

By Debbie James

Would you like to spend a day in nature atop Dinosaur Ridge counting migrating hawks as they make their journey north? Then HawkWatch might be for you.

For more than 30 years, volunteers in this international conservation program have been collecting valuable data for scientific research on raptors as indicators of ecosystem health. Hawks, accipiters, falcons, eagles and turkey vultures all face threats from climate change, habitat degradation, collisions with vehicles, and poisoning from ingesting toxic lead shot. Golden Eagles and American Kestrels are in decline, though Colorado's kestrel population remains steady. Scientists are trying to figure out why this is so.

The Dinosaur Ridge HawkWatch station west of Denver conducts the spring count daily from March 1 through May 7. Volunteer shifts are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. After the switch to Daylight Saving Time, the shifts go from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Birders from beginners to expert can simply show up to participate on days when experienced birders are present to help in identifying species – Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. To get to Dinosaur Ridge, take the Morrison exit off Interstate 70 (exit 259), drive south on Colorado 26 a short distance and turn left (east) into the "Stegosaurus" Park-'n-Ride parking lot. Park there and then follow the steep and sometimes muddy trail on foot through a gate and switchbacks up to the ridge. At the top, turn left and go through the gate.

For more information and details about what to bring with you, contact Debbie James via email at debjames323@gmail.com. Read much more about HawkWatch International at its website, <https://hawkwatch.org>.

"Raptor migration is one of the greatest spectacles on earth and witnessing a big raptor in flight is an experience of a lifetime."

– Jerry Liguori
(Hawk expert)

Welcome to New DFO Members

Deidre Callanan and Deidre Callanan, Aurora; David and Mindy Densmore, Englewood; Mark Miller, Longmont; Kathryn O'Donnell, Golden; Nancy Osborn, Denver; Beth Payne, Colorado Springs; Marsha S. Reeder and Steven Reeder, Aurora; Kathleen (Kate) Sandersen and Kyle Sandersen – Denver; Mary Beth Searles, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Nathaniel and Julia Auckland, David and Mindy Densmore, Pamela Dowd, Mary and Dave Driscoll, Lee and Linda Farrell, Von Fransen, John and Peggy Gonder, Terry and Becca Hammons, Jan and Doug Hodous, Kathleen (Kate) Sandersen and Kyle Sandersen, Karen von Saltza

April: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

By Ira Sanders

In April, the average high in Denver is 65 degrees and the average low is 35 degrees, up 13 and 9 degrees on the averages from March, though the temperature has reached 90 and fallen to -2. The average of 65 is up three degrees from 10 years ago. April can still have heavy snows. The national record for a 24-hour snowfall was 76 inches on April 14, 1921 west of Ward, CO. On the other end of the scale, Las Animas has experienced 100 degrees in April.

Passerine migration begins with the arrival of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. By the end of the month, all our regular warblers, like **Virginia's** (found on dry scrubby slopes), **MacGillivray's** (found skulking low in riparian areas like Lair o' the Bear Park in Jefferson County), and **Orange-crowned** (almost anywhere) have arrived. The last week of April is a good time to look for some rarities including **Northern Parula** (records exist from both the eastern and western slope), **Cape May** (on the eastern plains), and **Black and White** (in wooded areas). In fact, almost all of the eastern warblers are possible.

Remember to check all the vireos you see for **Cassin's** and **Blue-headed**, which are closely related to the more common **Plumbeous Vireo**. Their identification can be difficult but is worth the time.

White-throated Swifts are returning to Red Rocks Park and other cliff areas along the Front Range as well as other parts of Colorado. While watching the swifts, also watch for migrating **swallows** of almost every North American species.

Good places to look for migrants are Hasty Campground at John Martin Reservoir in Bent County, Crow Valley Campground at Briggsdale in Weld County, Fountain Creek Regional Park south of Colorado Springs in El Paso County, and Pueblo City Park, along with Valco Ponds SWA in Pueblo County. In Larimer County, Dixon Reservoir seems to get more than its share of good birds.

Around Denver, Cherry Creek State Park, Chatfield State Park, Belmar (south of the Lakewood library), Wheat Ridge Greenbelt and Bluff Lake (just east of old Stapleton on Havana) are all good places to bird.

The Welchester Tree Park on Eighth Avenue between Indiana and Simms in Lakewood can sometimes turn up some good birds. In 2006, there was a male **Blackburnian Warbler** seen by many people and in 2014, a **Blue-winged Warbler** was present and singing for weeks. A **Broad-winged Hawk** nested there in 2011.

Raptors are really moving in late March and April. This is the peak season for migrating raptors along the "hawk highway" that follows the hogback and foothills west of Denver. All three accipiters (**Sharp-shinned**, **Cooper's** and **Goshawk**), four falcons (**American Kestrel**, **Merlin**, **Prairie Falcon** and **Peregrine Falcon**) **Turkey Vulture**, both eagles and up to six species of buteo (**Red-tailed Hawk**, **Swainson's Hawk**, **Ferruginous Hawk**, **Broad-winged Hawk**, **Rough-legged Hawk**, and even the rare **Red-shouldered Hawk**) can be seen.

Many other species also use this "highway," among them **Sandhill Cranes**, **American White Pelicans**, **swifts**, **swallows**, **thrushes** and **waxwings**. A good vantage point is the HawkWatch site at Dinosaur Ridge (*see HawkWatch article by Debbie James on page 5*). Remember to bring your own sunscreen, binoculars and a folding chair.

Shorebirds are really showing up in numbers now. Anywhere with water and mud is a good place to look for them. The locations I mentioned last month are still good in April for these interesting birds. April and May are the

Continued on page 9

time for a rare shorebird in Colorado, the **Hudsonian Godwit**. On April 16, 2008, there was one at Union Reservoir in Weld County. There are other records from southeast Colorado.

Boreal Owls are calling more at this time of year. Cameron Pass in Larimer County on calm, starry nights can prove fruitful, but it is possible to hear their rapidly rising “hoo” notes almost anywhere in Colorado spruce-fir forests. They start singing shortly after sundown.

I'd like to thank Joey Kellner and Brandon Percival for their contributions to this month's column. If you have suggestions for any months yet to come for anywhere in the state, please feel free to email them to me at zroadrunner@fmail.com. All suggestions and contributions are gratefully accepted.

Volunteer Opportunities with DFO

By Chuck Hundertmark

Annual elections for the DFO Board of Directors and officers will be conducted at the April 22 monthly meeting. The Nominating Committee is recruiting candidates for two open director positions and a Nominating Committee chair. The Nominating Committee chair might also fill one of the director slots, though that is not a requirement.

If you enjoy talking and networking with other DFO members, you might enjoy leading the Nominating Committee's work to develop the DFO leadership pipeline. The committee meets several times a year and is most active in the months leading up to the March announcement of the slate of officers and directors to be elected in April.

Do you enjoy social media? DFO has a social media presence on Facebook with excellent administrators. The board from time to time wrestles with questions of whether DFO members would benefit from the organization's presence on other social media platforms. If that interests you, please consider volunteering.

The DFO website is the hub of our organization's communications. It's been called a web application, rather than a simple website, because it allows members to pay annual dues, register for field trips and events, access the monthly newsletter, view videos of monthly programs, and explore the archives of past programs and newsletter issues. DFO volunteers access the website to update pages, schedule field trips and events, and manage DFO's growing services to members. If websites are your thing, consider volunteering to help DFO with the strategic thinking about how we use these platforms.

The DFO board is also looking at how we should be involved in preservation of birds and their habitats. Though this is part of DFO's stated mission, it is our least developed mission area. Our efforts to strengthen this area would benefit from the thinking and efforts of someone with a strong interest in conservation advocacy.

If you would like to help in one of these areas, please contact DFO through the website at <https://dfobirds.org/Contact.aspx>. If you prefer, contact committee members directly. They are David Hill, Bill Turner, Bea Weaver and Chuck Hundertmark. And, do pass this along to anyone else you think might be interested.

Monthly Program Review: Nebraska's Swan Lakes



By Tim Johnson

On Feb. 25, DFO members were treated to *Nebraska's Swan Lakes*, a presentation by Stephen R. Jones, a Boulder environmental consultant, author and co-author of many books, field trip leader, and teacher. He also has a poetic bent. Jones's presentation combined a paean to the Nebraska Sandhill country, poetry, music, evocative photographs and sound recordings, intertwined with human and natural history, especially that of the Trumpeter Swan.

Jones described his talk as a story of "sadness, loss, redemption, and joy," quoting the last verse of *The Wild Swans of Coole* by W.B. Yeats:

*But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?*

Jones introduced us to an area of about 20,000 square miles in the northwest-north central part of Nebraska. The Sandhills sit over the Ogallala Aquifer and are drained on the east by the Loup and Niobrara rivers and on the west by many small basins. From a satellite view, the region's unique topography looks like a pattern of fish scales – an array of small lakes separated by grassy or sandy hills in between. Because the area cannot be tilled for farms and agriculture, it escaped the plows of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and is now mostly privately owned ranchlands, with no large population centers nearby.

Trumpeter Swans were thought to be extirpated in the USA by 1900. They were extensively hunted for plumage, meat, and "soft swanskins used for powder puffs" (Wikipedia) during migration. According to Jones, they were rediscovered in 1919 at what is now Red Rocks Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana. The warm springs and year-round open water in that part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem obviated the need for migration and allowed the species to survive.

However, there are several Sandhills bodies of water named Swan Lake. The Sandhills country's analogous habitat includes spring-fed streams that maintain a year-round temperature of about 40 degrees and allow Trumpeter Swans to overwinter. Without farming and pivot irrigation, this part of the Ogallala Aquifer shows no depletion. Trumpeter Swans need fairly large areas of open water. Weighing nearly 30 pounds, they are the heaviest water bird in North America and need an area of open water more than 100 yards long to take off.

Jones spent a good part of his talk describing his observations of Trumpeter Swan nesting over a breeding season at two lakes in the Sandhills, to the accompaniment of charming photographs of cygnets with adults. With large snapping turtles and predatory fish sharing Sandhills lakes, the survival rate of swan young there is only 10 percent. But because swans in the wild can survive up to 20 years, such high mortality may still be sustainable.

Trumpeter Swans usually nest on abandoned muskrat lodges, but Jones showed an example of a "natural" nest built from scratch. According to Wikipedia, a Trumpeter

Continued on page 9

Swan egg weighs about 11 ounces, making it possibly the largest of any flying bird alive today.

Jones said prospects for Trumpeter Swans in the Sandhills are good. After the species' U.S. population fell to just 70 individuals in 1932, cygnets were released at Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota in the 1960s. Restoration efforts there were so successful that by 1987 the population had reached nearly 300. The birds' expansion south into the Nebraska Sandhills followed, so that by 1999 there were nearly 600 recorded in the region, with Cherry and Garden counties accounting for about 70 percent of the total.

Trumpeter Swans now nest in many Sandhills lakes and large, shallow marshes (data from [Prairie Fire](#), 2013, Issue 1). Jones estimated there are about 1,000 individuals in the area now. The total U.S. population of Trumpeter Swans as of 2015 was about 63,000. For

more conservation history and general information, he recommends the website of the Trumpeter Swan Society (trumpeterswansociety.org).

On his many visits to the Sandhills, Jones prefers to camp. He enjoys what he calls the ghost-town feel of the hamlets, with friendly, if reserved inhabitants. He advised his audience that if they visit the Sandhills, remember that if a local asks, "Are you all right?" it really means "What the heck are you doing here?"

As usual, I recommend watching the video of this presentation when it is posted on the DFO website at <https://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>. In it you will see Jones's many delightful pictures, including insects, Sandhill Cranes with calls, and flowers. In a graceful musical ending, he concluded his presentation with an assortment of Sandhills swan scenes accompanied by Camille Saint-Saens' *The Swan*.

Denver Field Ornithologists Inc Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2018

	Dec 31, 18
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Denver Field Ornithologists Inc	
Endowment	2,945.17
Denver Field Ornithologists Inc - Other	35,292.36
Total Denver Field Ornithologists Inc	38,237.53
Total Checking/Savings	38,237.53
Total Current Assets	38,237.53
TOTAL ASSETS	38,237.53
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	30,619.59
Net Income	7,617.94
Total Equity	38,237.53
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	38,237.53

Denver Field Ornithologists Inc
Profit & Loss
January through December 2018

	<u>Jan - Dec 18</u>
Income	
Direct Public Support	
Company Matching Funds	300.00
Individual Contributions	6,152.00
Misc Donations	48.00
	<u>6,500.00</u>
Total Direct Public Support	6,500.00
Program Income	
Membership Dues	16,185.00
	<u>16,185.00</u>
Total Program Income	16,185.00
Total Income	22,685.00
Expense	
Bank Fees	12.00
Contract Services	
Website Maintenance	500.00
	<u>500.00</u>
Total Contract Services	500.00
Grants Distributed	5,300.00
Operations	
Layout Services	2,475.00
Printing and Copying	2,409.58
Software	14.99
Speakers Fees, Honoraria	1,722.60
Supplies	129.58
Website Hosting and Other	76.99
	<u>6,828.74</u>
Total Operations	6,828.74
Other Types of Expenses	
Insurance - Liability, D and O	1,302.00
PayPal Expense	427.68
Sec'y of State annual filing	10.00
	<u>1,739.68</u>
Total Other Types of Expenses	1,739.68
Travel and Meetings	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	294.91
Training	391.73
	<u>686.64</u>
Total Travel and Meetings	686.64
Total Expense	15,067.06
Net Income	<u><u>7,617.94</u></u>

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@gmail.com
Will Burt (2021)	willburt43@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2019)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Vacant	
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Will Burt, Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
----------------------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

March 25, 2019

Ted Floyd

Why We Bird

April 22, 2019

Nathan Pieplow

The Secret Lives of Ducks

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 60 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MAY 2019/VOL 55 NO 5

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)



Cinnamon Teal (Credit: Jim Esten)

Monthly Programs

DFO monthly programs are held at Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3121 South University Blvd., Denver. Programs begin at 7 p.m. There are no monthly programs in May, June, or July. Programs will resume in August.

Monday, April 22
Monthly Program and
DFO Annual Meeting
The Secret Lives of Ducks
Nathan Pieplow

Ducks are some of our most fascinating and underappreciated birds. Duck courtship happens right in front of us all winter long, yet we often don't recognize it. What looks like preening or random movement to the untrained eye is actually a tightly choreographed dance.

These courtship displays are often accompanied by dramatic vocalizations, as well, that go way beyond "quack." In this talk, Nathan Pieplow will introduce us to the communications systems of ducks and touch on the wilder aspects of their reproductive biology.

Nathan Pieplow is the author of the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*, the western volume of which will be just published (April 2). An avid bird sound recordist and videographer, he writes the bird sound blog Earbirding.com, is an author of the Colorado Birding Trail, and is the former editor of *Colorado Birds*. He teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Pieplow's presentation will be preceded by the DFO annual meeting, at which officers and members of the DFO Board of Directors will be elected by the members present at the meeting. DFO officers are elected to one-year terms. This year the following candidates were put forward by the Nominating Committee:



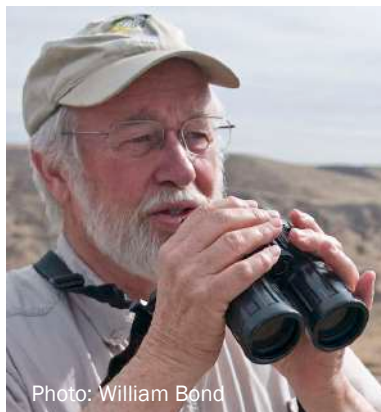
Nathan Pieplow

David Hill (president)
Susan Blansett (vice president)
Sue Summers (treasurer)
Debbie James (secretary)
Mary Cay Burger (Membership chair)

Directors of the DFO Board are elected to three-year terms. This year the following candidates were put forward by the Nominating Committee:

Tom Behnfield (Finance Committee chair)
Chris Goulart (Grants Committee chair)

After a banner year, a new beginning for DFO



From the President Chuck Hundertmark

In May, my term as president of Denver Field Ornithologists will end. Dave Hill, our current vice president, will take on the challenges of guiding this venerable club into the future. In this time of transition, I find myself looking both backward and forward.

Last year, David Suddjian led the club in its first-ever “Big Year.” That effort produced a significant increase in the number of field trips each month and engaged our membership in a spirited quest that tallied 361 species on DFO outings in 2018. That rise in trips, in turn, helped ameliorate the problem of so many outings filling up so rapidly that people could not find one to join.

At the end of 2018, people wondered if the momentum of all those trips being offered could possibly continue in 2019. Today, I checked the number of trips DFO is offering for May and counted 28 – six more trips than we led in May 2018 at the height of spring migration in our DFO Big Year push. Yes, eight of

this May’s trips are part of the Spring Bird Count, which weren’t DFO trips last year. Despite that quibble, it seems obvious that the 2018 enthusiasm of DFO trip leaders still thrives in 2019. Our club continues to offer an amazing number of birding opportunities.

The integration of both the Spring and Fall Bird Counts into the DFO field trip program was another big step forward last year. Vice President Dave Hill worked with Hugh Kingery, who has long coordinated those seasonal counts, to make them part of DFO’s regular program of bird outings.

This April, DFO launched its new series of Better Birding workshops. Meredith McBurney led a session on “Fundamentals of Passerine Identification,” which was well-received by participants. The Better Birding Committee, led by Karen Drozda, has five more workshops planned for the remaining months of 2019.

Also, in the works is a redesign of the DFO website. In the five years since the launch of the DFO’s original and current site, we have pinned a lot of features on it. Although these features have served our members, trip leaders and officers well, they have begun to threaten the stability of our online platform. Moreover, in a short five years, the number of users accessing the website on smart phones and tablets has grown greatly, though the site’s original design is not optimal for mobile devices.

So, Sharon Tinianow and DFO’s Communication and Outreach Committee have been working with designer Ann Johnson to upgrade the site. They are incorporating member requests to simplify the website links and organization, make access to content more intuitive, and better serve and accommodate mobile device users.

As Dave Hill takes over the DFO president’s mission of moving these projects to completion, my challenge will be to assist him if he needs me and to stay out of the way the rest of the time.

In the end, I believe Dave will find, as I have, that working for DFO is a tremendously rewarding experience, due largely to the enthusiasm, dedication and warmth of the members.

Thanks to all of you for the privilege of leading DFO these past two years.

Monthly Program Review: *Why We Bird*, with Ted Floyd

By Tim Johnson

On March 25, DFO members were treated to a return visit by Ted Floyd, editor of *Birding*, the magazine of the American Birding Association (ABA). In his *Why We Bird* presentation, Floyd used a series of stories to explore the motivations and rewards of birding. Besides being widely published in popular and technical journals, he has written five bird books, including the *Smithsonian Guide to the Birds of North America*, the *ABA Field Guide to the Birds of Colorado*, and Floyd's newest book, *How to Know the Birds*, copies of which he signed after his presentation.

A resident of Boulder County, Floyd began his talk by recounting his sighting of a European Starling while he sat in Denver traffic on southbound I-25 on his way to the DFO presentation. He said it prompted him to muse about how birders are different from the rest of humanity. We acquire the ability to fixate quickly on birds, even ordinary starlings, and observe their details.

After a nod to Roger Tory Peterson for introducing reliable methods of bird identification, Floyd posed the real question: why acquire such an ability? What's in it for people? He offered three common answers, and then discounted each of them in part:

- **Because birds are glorious, colorful creatures capable of flight and are inherently worthy of being revered.** Floyd suggested that if this were a major motivation for birding, in order to sample the largest diversity of birds, we would spend our time in the Bird World exhibit at the Denver Zoo.
- **Because birding is akin to hunting and/or the pleasure of acquiring trophies.** Floyd maintained that hunting is primarily about getting food or a trophy – but who would hunt a Mew Gull, for example, for either purpose?
- **Because birders are motivated by a conservation ethic.** Floyd took note of the conviction that nature – especially nature not influenced by humans – is inherently beautiful and worth paying attention to, and thus that birding is a way to conserve that beauty. He suggested it's actually the other ways around: that birding leads us to think about conservation issues.

Floyd went on to counter those suggested motivations further by considering birders' enthusiastic response to three species beloved in Colorado:

- **American Dipper** – Floyd pointed out that dippers may not be gloriously colorful, but they do remarkable things as the only passerine bird that dives and swims underwater. "You can't spend 30 seconds watching a dipper without seeing it do something really cool," he said. Thus, the chance to observe arresting and unique behavior is one motivation for birding.
- **Sandhill Crane** – Why does this bird, Floyd asked, rate higher in our affections than the Great Blue Heron, which is just as large and handsome and is easier to see? He answered that the "cobirds" email feed of birding rarities contains many sightings of migrating Sandhill Cranes along the Front Range, while Great Blue Herons are largely ignored. He suggested the sight and especially the sound of the cranes' calls overhead, particularly in our urban corridor, embody utter wilderness right in our midst.
- **American Avocet** – He recounted the story of an apparently widowed male avocet that hatched and raised young fledglings by himself from a backyard nest near Floyd's Lafayette home. The bird's accomplishment attracted wide attention in the neighborhood and on social media, drawing many visitors to that back yard. Floyd suggested the motivation here was to socialize with other members of the community while sharing a memorable engagement with nature.

Floyd devoted the rest of his talk to one more group of three – three examples of observed phenomena in nature and how the knowledge acquired can affect us in surprising ways.

His first example was the Bushtit, a species he said was rarely seen in Colorado until the past 20 years, after the tiny birds came to the eastern side of the state (perhaps as a consequence of climate change). In doing so, Bushtits made obsolete the descriptions of their range and

Continued on page 4



Sandhill Cranes (Credit: Jim Esten)

PROGRAM REVIEW cont. from page 3

behavior in field guides and other publications. Floyd believes what also drew and kept them here are backyard bird feeders, especially suet feeders, a food source they weren't known for visiting. What's more, Bushtits are learning to sing, a skill not previously in their vocal toolbox. Floyd said both of these surprising behaviors are being culturally transmitted among the Bushtit population, examples of the dynamism of nature.

He next recounted a story about the Red-eyed Vireo and the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák. Floyd played for the DFO audience a portion of the third movement of Dvořák's popular *American Quartet*, which he wrote during an 1893 summer vacation stay in an Iowa farming community. The story goes that Dvořák incorporated into this string quartet the high, repetitive strain of a bird he had heard outside, which he believed was a Scarlet Tanager. Many years later, Floyd heard what he thought was a far different birdsong in Dvořák's quartet – that of the Red-eyed Vireo. When Floyd capped his Dvořák story by playing a recording of the vireo's song beside the musical passage, it was clear that this was the bird that so captured the famous composer's attention.

Floyd's final story began with his fascination with nighttime birding. He said that while attempting to separate insect sounds from the bird sounds in his after-dark recordings, he wondered if the bugs might be just as interesting as the birds. He played for his DFO audience the songs of three insects: Anglewing Katydid, Fall Field Cricket, and the Snowy Tree (or Thermometer) Cricket.

He then introduced his listeners to Dolbear's law, an 1890s physicist's observation that the rate of crickets' chirps changes with air temperature. Floyd was clearly enthused, especially about the simultaneous chorusing of these insects, which we hear in the night but seldom ever see.

In summing up his talk, Floyd offered his own answer to the title question of the evening's program: *Why We Bird*. He said birds are an "incredible vector" for learning. Our own curiosity draws us to them and what we learn can take odd twists and turns that occasionally result in brand new perspectives.

Floyd ended his presentation with another surprising lesson within a photo projected on the screen above him: a gorgeous sunset sky over Waneka Lake in Lafayette. And yet, the ethereal rays of light in the image were beaming from the eastern horizon, not the western. How was that possible? Floyd explained that they were [anticrepuscular rays](#), a meteorological and optical phenomenon he'd never heard of until curiosity prompted him to find out. (Look it up yourself!) For Floyd and his audience, it was one last example of how much we have to learn from the natural processes going on all around us, all the time, right under our noses.

If you missed Floyd's program, you can view the video on the DFO website. Choose "Programs" on the homepage and then "Past Programs" from the dropdown menu. Click on the red video icon beside the March 25 program listing.

SAVE THE DATE!

DFO ANNUAL PICNIC IS JUNE 8

This year's fourth annual Denver Field Ornithologists' Members-Only Summer Picnic is scheduled for **Saturday, June 8**. Last year's gathering at Prospect Park in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt was so successful, we're holding the picnic there again this year.

Full details will be in the next issue of *The Lark Bunting*, but here are the basics:

- Like last year, the picnic is free to all DFO members and families or "plus-1" guests
- DFO will bring and grill bratwurst and veggie dogs and supply the beverages
- Picnic attendees will be asked to bring potluck picnic fare to share – salads, side dishes, and desserts, to be assigned by alphabetical groupings
- Picnic-goers will be encouraged to consider voluntary donations to the DFO Research, Education & Conservation Grants Fund
- Picnic will start at 11 a.m., with pre-picnic birding walks in the greenbelt to begin as early as 7-7:30 a.m.

More particulars next month, including RSVP date. We hope you'll join us on June 8!

Updated, redesigned DFO website to go live in May

By Sharon Tinianow

The DFO Board's Communication and Outreach Committee has been working with website developer Ann Johnson on an updated DFO website. You can expect to see a fresh new look and reorganized website content when the site goes live in May.

The work of the committee was guided by the member survey conducted last fall and two focus groups held earlier this year. In addition, the current DFO website is five years old and does not render well on mobile phones and tablets. The new website will function much better on these smaller devices.

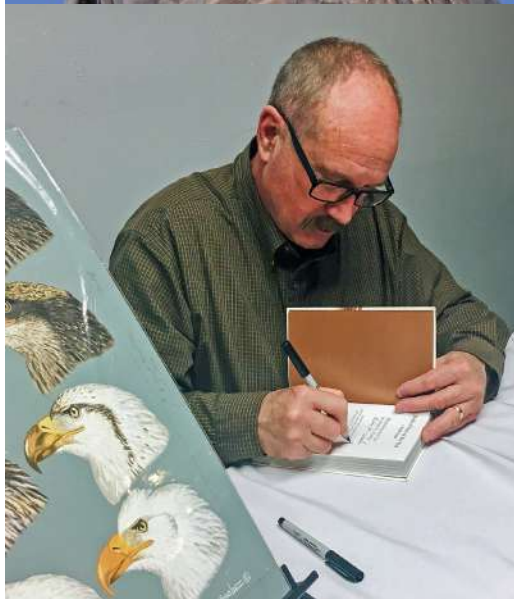
Among other improvements, the new format will make it possible for users to access the most frequently used sections of the website with a single click from the home page. Those sections include Field Trips, Programs, Current Newsletter, and Membership.

Members who took the survey indicated they did not know that DFO's monthly evening programs were videotaped and available online, and they expressed interest in viewing them. A new quick link on the homepage to the videos and descriptions of past monthly programs will make that easier.

The revamped homepage will also make it easy to find information about DFO. Rosters of the DFO Board of Directors, officers and committee chairs feature links to each individual's email address. Users can also locate DFO citizen science projects, the DFO Research, Conservation and Education Grants Fund, and eBird checklists of all DFO birding trips with simple homepage clicks.

With the redesign and improvements, the DFO website will be able to accommodate new items and topics, too. This was a key consideration in the revamp as our club expands to include new programs and special events.

Many thanks to all the DFO members who filled out the survey and attended one or both of the focus groups. We think the improved website will enhance your experience with the Denver Field Ornithologists. After the updated website's launch next month, you can quickly and easily submit any comments and concerns to DFO web manager Jim Esten. Simply use the DFO feedback form that will appear at the bottom of the new homepage.



Top: Golden Eagle (Credit: Jim Esten)
Bottom: Brian Wheeler (Credit: Marjorie Jannotta)

Record DFO crowd hears birds-of-prey expert Wheeler

By Chuck Hundertmark

More than 170 raptor lovers attended a Denver Field Ornithologists program by birds-of-prey aficionado Brian K. Wheeler in late March. Wheeler, a long-time illustrator, photographer and author from Firestone, CO, drew a record DFO audience to his March 30 presentation at Unity Spiritual Center Denver.

He began his Saturday afternoon talk by introducing the audience to his methods for learning about raptors and their plumages. Wheeler began drawing birds and mammals at age 7, narrowing his art primarily to birds by his teens. To hone his skills drawing and painting birds, he studied bird specimens in museums and prepared study skins at Central Michigan University and the Peabody Museum at Yale University. He spent time as an observer at hawk migration sites and later spent years photographing birds of prey.

As part of his photographic approach, Wheeler wore ghillie suits – shaggy cloaks of 3D camouflage – to approach raptors closely without spooking them. He shared with his audience the advice that it's important not to look the bird in the eye even when well-camouflaged or you will startle the bird.

Wheeler's talk was followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by Ira Sanders and Chuck Hundertmark. Wheeler discussed several photographs of hawks submitted by birders. Dave Prentice submitted a nice set of photos of a Northern Harrier with brown dorsal plumage typical of juveniles and the light undersides typical of adult males. Most field guides don't depict this plumage.

The program was originally scheduled for the Belmar Library in Lakewood, but when registration requests quickly exceeded the 71-person capacity of the meeting room, the DFO board decided to move the event to Unity Spiritual Center Denver, where DFO's regular monthly programs are being held this year.

After the program, Wheeler signed copies of his new field guides, *Birds of Prey of the East* and *Birds of Prey of the West*. These guides contain detailed species accounts of North American vultures, hawks, eagles and falcons. They are accompanied by Wheeler's own illustrations.

In two previous works, *Raptors of Eastern North America* and *Raptors of Western North America*, he presented more detailed species accounts illustrated with his own photos of multiple subspecies, age and sex plumages.

Wheeler's first venture illustrating field guides came with publication of *Hawks of North America* in the Peterson Field Guide series. His illustrations accompanied William S. Clark's text for the guide. He followed those with photos to illustrate Clark's *A Photographic Guide to Raptors of North America*.

A video of the Wheeler program will be posted on the DFO website.

May: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

By Ira Sanders

In May, the average high in Denver is 71 degrees and the average low is 44, up 9 degrees on the high and low from April, although it has reached 96 and fallen to 22 in past Mays. One of my sources for temperatures has the high and low average staying the same. Another raises the high average to 73, a 2-degree rise in the past 10 years. May can also have heavy rains and Front Range flooding by cyclonic storms carrying moisture from both the Pacific and the Gulf. In 1969 a storm poured 10 inches of rain on the Denver suburbs. Denver's record 24-hour rainfall of 6.53 inches fell in May, too, though that was 1876, 143 years ago. In 1996, 107 degrees in the town of Holly set the May record high for Colorado.

May is THE month for birding just about anywhere in the state. The more you get out, the more you will see. Early in the morning, check the trees and bushes around where you live and you might be surprised by what you find. The trees in your local park can host warblers and vireos as well as grosbeaks and tanagers. Even small parks in your neighborhood like the Welchester Tree Park in Lakewood, off Eighth Avenue between Simms and Indiana, can hold great birds like **Blackburnian Warbler**, **Black-throated Gray Warbler** and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**. **Ovenbirds** can be found in the brush and waterthrushes along the creek. All of the western **Empidonax Flycatchers** (except Pacific-slope) can be found here – and who knows? Maybe you could even find a rare eastern cousin like **Alder Flycatcher** or **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**. I've seen many migrants in Cheesman Park in Denver on lunchtime walks.

Flammulated Owls can be heard along the foothills west and north of Golden to Lyons. I have heard them

in the lower parts of Golden Gate Canyon State Park and just above White Ranch Open Space Park, starting about 10 p.m. I have had luck hearing these small owls on Crawford Gulch Road, which you can access from Golden Gate Canyon Road off Hwy 93 on the north edge of Golden. Other places to look and listen for these owls include Mount Falcon Park, Boulder Mountain Park and the St. Vrain canyons west of Lyons. When listening for the Flammulated, also listen for **Northern Saw-whet Owls** and **Northern Pygmy-Owls**. **Poorwills** are also calling in the evening along the foothills. **Boreal Owls** can still be heard at Cameron Pass.

Migrant traps on the plains can be especially rewarding. The rest area at Last Chance (Colorado 71 and U.S. 36) about 60 miles east of Denver can be incredible. I have seen **Blackpoll**, **Palm**, and **Black-throated Blue Warblers** there as well as **Golden-crowned** and **White-throated Sparrows** (May 7, 2007) and Tammy and I had a **Louisiana Waterthrush** on May 9, 1999. A **Connecticut Warbler** has also been found here. Another great migrant trap is Crow Valley Campground at Briggsdale near Pawnee National Grasslands. Almost every warbler species and I believe every vireo species seen in Colorado has been seen there at one time or another. Even a **Costa's Hummingbird** was seen there. You can see hundreds of thrushes there, and if you look closely, you might see a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** in the mix. A **Varied Thrush** visited this site one fall.

Hasty Campground at John Martin Reservoir, 25 miles west of Lamar, can be jumping. **Mississippi Kites** roost there and a **Painted Bunting** visited in May 2000. Grosbeaks and tanagers are frequently seen there, and don't forget to check the mudflats and stretches of sand at the reservoir for shorebirds. **Piping Plover** and **Least Tern** nest at the reservoir, though sand areas along the shore can be off limits to protect these endangered species' nests. Unfortunately, in the past couple of years the terns and plovers have lost their priority with the federal agencies tasked to protect them. To my knowledge, the last time they had any protection was in

Continued on page 8

2017. You can walk the edge of the enclosures, if there are any, to look for the plovers and maybe see the terns as they fly along the shore. Watch also for **Snowy Plovers**, which are more common than Piping. If you go out there in May, please let me know the status of these rare birds and whether it appears there is any protection for them.

The area behind Lamar Community College has been a great place in the past for rarities like **Mourning** and **Prairie Warblers**. **Northern Cardinal** and **Carolina Wren** are seen there regularly. Willow Creek Park just north and east of the college is also a great spot you shouldn't miss. Walk the area east of the creek for migrants. Mississippi Kites nest here and **Red-headed Woodpecker** can be found in the big trees at the northwest part of the park. **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** are here in numbers. The Lamar Cemetery at the south side of town hosts **Lesser Nighthawk** and plenty of migrants.

As long as you are in the southeast part of the state, the area below the dam at Two Buttes (Baca County) has seen rarities including **Wood Thrush** and **Golden-winged**, **Black-throated Green** and **Cerulean Warblers**. Also look for the **Barn Owls** that roost in the cliffs.

Places closer to Denver with great May birding include Barr Lake State Park (Adams County), Chatfield State Park (Jefferson and Douglas Counties), Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County), Castlewood Canyon State Park (Douglas County) and Belmar Park, Red Rocks Park and the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (Jefferson County). Dixon Lake in Larimer County seems to get more than its share of migrants and rarities and Pueblo City Park and Valco State Park west of Pueblo should not be forgotten.

Lower Latham Reservoir near LaSalle, Loloff Reservoir just northeast of Lower Latham and Beebee Draw south of Lower Latham, all in Weld County, may be the best places to look for shorebirds this spring along the Front Range. Union Reservoir in western Weld County may have shoreline, but that could change with the coming snowmelt runoff. Water probably will be high in many of the big lakes and reservoirs because of the heavy mountain snowpack. As a result, there may be very little shoreline or mudflats for shorebirds. Now is the time of year to look for **White-rumped Sandpipers** as they make their annual pass through Colorado. Keep your eyes open for **Red-necked Phalaropes**, too.

Since almost everyone has internet access, we recommend that you check Cobirds frequently for postings of rarities. I wish I could list all the places to look and bird, but as it is said, the birds are where you find them, and in May, they can be anywhere. The County Birding resource on the Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) website (www.cobirds.org) is an excellent resource to lead you to exceptional birding areas. Keep your eyes and ears open and good birding.

Thank you to Joey Kellner and Karl Stetcher for their contributions to this month's column.

If you have birding location suggestions for any months yet to come for anywhere in the state, please email them to me at zroadrunner14@gmail.com. All suggestions and contributions are gratefully accepted.

Welcome to New DFO Members

Dina Baker, Westminster; Mary Carter, Highlands Ranch; Eric Dinkel, Denver; Cathy Groene, Cherry Hills; Deborah Hagood, Denver; Michelle Stringer and Brian Stringer, Wheat Ridge; Amy Sturrock, Denver; Brook Tingey, Boulder; Judy Trujillo, Lakewood; Cindy Valentine, Castle Rock; Susan Young, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Laurie Chotena, Andrew Fontenot, Cathy Groene, Greg Mihalik, Pablo Quezada



Top Left: Palm Warbler
 Top Right: Painted Bunting
 Bottom Left: Northern Cardinal
 (Credits: Jim Esten)

SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation is seeking two passerine bird banders to work on their Nature Mapping Program. The fulltime positions will work from May through August. The primary species of interest is the Mountain Bluebird. For details and the application form, visit the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation website at <https://jhwildlife.org/about-us/jobs-and-internships/>.

May Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Dress for the weather and bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip are on the DFO website's Field Trips page. June field trips will appear on the website beginning May 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

* denotes a Spring Bird Count field trip

Pawnee National Grasslands (Weld County)

Saturday, May 4

6 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Karen Drozda & Chris Goulart

Email: drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 Broadway to carpool.

Expect to see a nice variety of grassland birds and migrants.

Roxborough State Park

Saturday, May 4

8 – 10 a.m.

Alison Kondler

Email: birdtrills@gmail.com

Phone: 303-904-9140

Trail difficulty: easy

Maximum participants: 6

Directions: Roxborough State Park is south of Chatfield State Park. From Wadsworth Blvd, take Waterton Road east to North Rampart Range Road. Turn right and go south to Roxborough Park Road. Turn left and then immediately right on Roxborough Road; follow signs to the Park.

DFO Field Trip: SW New Mexico (August 17-24)

Most Denver Field Ornithologists field trips are posted on the DFO website on the first of the month, one month ahead of the month in which the trip will occur. This gives members at least a month and more to plan their participation in local day trips as well as two-day, out-of-town excursions.

For longer, multi-day outings – known as Extended Out-of-State or EOS trips – DFO advertises birding trips farther in advance to give prospective participants more lead time to fit a longer trip into their personal schedules.

In mid-August, DFO plans an EOS field trip to southwest New Mexico. The main base of operations for this Aug. 17-24 excursion will be Silver City, NM. There will be stops along the way to and from Silver City, including Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, canyons in the Magdalena Mountains, Percha Dam State Park and Emory Pass in Gila National Forest, among others. Once settled in the southwest corner of the state, the group will visit locations including Pinos Altos, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, Lake Roberts, Virden, and a few others.

If you are interested in this exceptional birding opportunity, contact primary trip leader John Breitsch via email at jbreitsch@hotmail.com to express interest and for more details. Although you cannot actually register for the trip until it is posted on the DFO website, you can indicate your interest or commitment to participate. John will make sure your name is on the official list when trip registration officially opens with the trip's posting on the Field Trip page of the website.

Learn to ID birds by their songs and calls while hiking on the beautiful Willow Creek trail. Beginner to expert birders welcome. This is a shared event with Roxborough State Park public. State parks pass or day pass required. Meet outside visitor center auditorium.

First Creek at RM Arsenal

Sunday, May 5

6:30 – 11 a.m.

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: From I-70 take Peña Blvd exit and drive north (toward airport) to 56th Avenue exit. Turn left at stoplight at bottom of off ramp, pass west under highway and turn right at First Creek parking lot (log fence).

We'll start on the national wildlife refuge side and, time permitting, also bird the First Creek @ DEN Open Space upstream. Expect plenty of migrants and returning spring-summer species, and say goodbye to overwintering raptors. Expect to walk 3-4 miles on mostly level dirt-gravel and paved trail. No restrooms at First Creek, so "go before you go" at the King Soopers in nearby Green Valley Ranch.

Southeastern Colorado

Tues, May 7 – Wed, May 8

7 – 9 a.m.

David Suddjian & John Malenich

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail difficulty: strenuous

Maximum participants: 9

May Field Trips Continued...

Directions: Meeting location in Otero County or nearby will be announced to participants in advance, as will carpool arrangements.

This two-day trip will be a classic Southeast Colorado field trip at a peak time of spring migration. Trip will visit areas in Prowers, Baca, Kiowa, Bent, Otero and Crowley counties, hitting many of the best spots for spring migrants and expectations for rare birds. Long, full days with long drives and overnighing in Lamar. Participants responsible for own lodging arrangements and food.

Boulder County Thursday, May 9 7 – 9 a.m.

John Malenich
Email: john.malenich@comcast.net
Phone: 303-359-9456 cell
Trail difficulty: moderate
Maximum participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the northwest corner of the parking lot of the King Soopers at 1650 30th St., Boulder. This short morning trip to a few locations in the Boulder area targets spring migrants and any rarities reported in the area. Exact locations will be determined in the days before the trip. Expect to walk a few miles on level trails.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)* Friday, May 10

6:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Cynthia Madsen
Email: cmadsen08@gmail.com
Phone: 303-770-6534
Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet in the marina parking lot of Cherry Creek State Park.

This Spring Bird Count trip will visit areas in the park as designated by leader. State parks pass or day use pass required.

Barr Lake State Park* Saturday, May 11 6:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

David Hill
Email: d_d_hill@comcast.net
Phone: 303-870-4316
Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet at Bird Conservancy of the Rockies facility at Barr Lake State Park. Exit I-76 at Bromley Lane. Drive east 0.25 mile, then turn right (south) onto Lark Bunting Lane. Continue 1.1 mi to parking lot at end of road.

This Spring Bird Count trip will visit areas in the park as designated by leader. State parks pass or day use pass required.

Chatfield State Park* Saturday, May 11 6:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Joey Kellner
Email: vireo1@comcast.net
Phone: 303-978-1748
Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet at the East entrance station of Cherry Creek State Park.

This Spring Bird Count trip “officially” ends about 7 p.m., but all are welcome to come and help out as long as they can. Trip covers areas in park as designated by leader. State parks pass or day use pass required.

Audubon Nature Center* Saturday, May 11 6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Karen Drozda
Email: drozforte@AOL.com
Phone: 303-388-0891
Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet at the Audubon Nature Center parking lot just south of Chatfield State Park. From C-470 drive south on Wadsworth Blvd. Turn left onto Waterton Road, then left again into Audubon Center.

This Spring Bird Count trip hikes on downstream trails for 4-5 miles. Please wear long pants (poison ivy, thistles, knapweed). After lunch, we will drive south past Roxborough State Park road to look for prairie birds.

Lower Bear Creek* Saturday, May 11 6:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Mark Amershek
Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet in parking lot east of Conoco/Circle K station. Exit C-470 onto Morrison Road. Drive west 0.1 mile and turn right onto Rooney Road. Turn right into parking lot across from gas station.

This Spring Bird Count trip covers areas inside and outside Bear Creek Lake Park as designated by leader. Fee fir Bear Creek Park entry (City of Lakewood).

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR* Sunday, May 12 6:15 a.m. – 5 p.m.

David Hill
Email: d_d_hill@comcast.net
Phone: 303-870-4316
Trail difficulty: moderate
Maximum participants: 9

Directions: Meet at the RMA Visitor Center. From the intersection of Quebec Pkwy and 64th Ave (stoplight), drive east on Prairie Pkwy 0.6 mile. Turn left onto Gateway Road and continue 1.1 mi to visitor center parking lot.

Castlewood Canyon State Park (Douglas County)* Sunday, May 12 6:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Karen Drozda
Email: drozforte@AOL.com
Phone: 303-388-0891
Trail difficulty: moderate

May Field Trips Continued...

Directions: Meet at North Entrance Station. From Franktown, drive 0.5 miles west on CO 86. Turn south on Castlewood Canyon Road, continue 2.2 miles to park entrance station. State parks pass or day use pass required.

Barr Lake Periphery*

Sunday, May 12

7:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail difficulty: easy

Directions: Meet on access road to entrance station at Barr Lake State Park. Exit I-76 at Bromley Lane. Drive east 0.8 mile. Turn right (south) onto Picadilly Road and continue 1.9 miles. Turn right onto entrance road and continue 0.2 mile to pull-off BEFORE park entrance station.

This Spring Bird Count trip will drive and stop along country roads around Barr Lake, looking for raptors, sparrows and other prairie birds. State parks pass NOT required. This trip is especially suitable for persons with limited mobility.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, May 12

8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Karen von Saltza

Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com

Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet at Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek State Park. State parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half-day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails can be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

Mount Falcon Park (Jefferson County)

Saturday, May 18

6:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

John Breitsch

Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com

Phone: 303-588-0552

Trail difficulty: strenuous

Directions: Meet at upper parking lot, west side of Mount Falcon Park. From C-470 and U.S. 285 South, turn right at Indian Hills exit and drive to Parmalee Gulch Road. Follow Parmalee Gulch for about 2.5 miles to Picutis Road. Turn right at Picutis and follow Mount Falcon signs to upper parking area.

Third of three trips to explore routes and sections of Mount Falcon Park that are slightly different from the usual. Starting on standard route along Castle trail to Tower Trail, the trip diverges to long and winding Parmalee Trail. This is the most strenuous of the three trips in this series. To join trip leader for quick early loop up Tower Trail before official start of trip, meet and leave parking lot at 4:45 a.m.

Chico Basin Ranch

Sunday, May 19

5:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Diane Roberts & Mary Fran O'Connor

Email: Samatha5760@gmail.com

Phone: 720-278-9025

Trip difficulty: Strenuous (long driving distances)

Maximum participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Safeway, 9229 Lincoln Avenue, Exit 193, Lone Tree.

Carpool in high-clearance vehicles about 115 miles (2 hours-plus) from Lone Tree meet-up to this working cattle ranch SE of Colorado Springs in El Paso/Pueblo counties. Group will follow ranch roads in vehicles with birding stops at various ponds, wetlands and grasslands. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Scopes handy but not necessary. Two-way radios

very helpful for car-to-car contact. Ranch visitor fee is \$10 per person. Carpool volunteer drivers needed with high-clearance vehicles for ranch dirt roads. Prospective drivers should contact trip leader ASAP.

Second Creek Open Space (Commerce City / Adams County)

Sunday, May 19

6:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail difficulty: moderate

Directions: Meet at Buffalo Mesa trailhead parking (off Kittredge). Take I-70 to Quebec Street exit, then go north 4.7 miles to Colorado Hwy 2. Turn right on CO-2 and drive north to 104th Avenue. Turn right on 104th and go east 2.5 miles to Kittredge. Left on Kittredge (north) and 2 blocks to parking lot on left.

Trip follows meandering Second Creek south from the parking lot/ trailhead through grassy fields, trees and creekside vegetation in search of spring songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. Trailside restrooms are about halfway through our 3- to 4-mile walk, which also loops into Buckley Ranch Open Space.

Lincoln County & Brett Gray Ranch (Restricted Access)

Tuesday, May 21

4:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.

John Malenich & David Suddjian

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456 cell

Trip difficulty: strenuous (long drives, very full day)

Maximum participants: 9

Directions: Meet at the Safeway, 9229 East Lincoln Ave. Lone Tree, CO. Park away from the store.

May Field Trips Continued...

An ambitious full-day trip to a number of fantastic birding locations across Lincoln County at a great time for migrants and rare birds. Expect moderate walking throughout the day and possible hot temperatures. Trip will include a visit to Brett Gray Ranch, working cattle ranch managed by The Nature Conservancy. Brett Gray access is restricted and participants must sign liability waiver and return to trip leader at least 3 days before trip. Bring lunch, water, sun protection and dress for weather.

West Metro Area Thursday, May 23 6 a.m. – 2 p.m.

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456 cell

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Home Depot at 4277 S. Eldridge St, Morrison, CO.

Trip will visit a number of locations in west metro area for late spring migrants and rarities. Locations will be determined based on recent sightings, but likely stops include Bear Creek Lake Regional Park (admission fee or park pass) and Welchester Tree Park. Bring lunch, water and a scope if you have one, and dress for the weather.

Boulder County Friday, May 24 6:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 10

Directions: Meet at northwest corner of parking lot at King Soopers, 1650 30th St., Boulder.

Trip will target spring migrants and rare birds at several locations in Boulder and, possibly, Lyons.

Possible stops include CU East Campus/Boulder Creek-Skunk Creek Confluence, Old South St. Vrain Road in Lyons, Green Mountain Cemetery, Walden Ponds, and Skunk Creek Trail. Several miles of walking on paved or dirt trails, possibly with a few moderate uphill stretches. Bring lunch and water. Scopes handy but not necessary.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Friday, May 24 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 10

Directions: Meet at north (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway and carpool from there.

Visit private Ken Caryl Ranch and adjacent parklands on this evening visit to explore the hogback areas and watch the evening settle over the area. Focus after sunset on hearing and seeing Common Poorwill. We may walk a mile or two on mostly gentle slopes.

Chico Basin Ranch Saturday, May 25 6 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Mark Amershek

Email: mammershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail difficulty: Moderate

Maximum participants: 11

Directions: Meet in southeast corner of King Soopers parking lot, 5544 Promenade Parkway, Castle Rock.

Carpool about 100 miles (2 hours) from Castle Rock meet-up to this working cattle ranch SE of Colorado Springs in El Paso/Pueblo counties. (Ranch visitor fee is \$10 per person.) Group will follow ranch dirt roads in high-clearance vehicles (ruts,

mud) with birding stops at various ponds, wetlands and grasslands. Bring lunch and plenty of water for this all-day trip. Scopes handy but not necessary. Two-way radios very helpful for car-to-car contact. Volunteer drivers needed with high-clearance vehicles. Prospective drivers should contact trip leader beforehand.

Waterton Canyon Saturday, May 25 7 7:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Alison Kondler

Email: birdtrills@gmail.com

Phone: 303-904-9140

Trail difficulty: Easy

Maximum participants: 12

Directions: From C-470 take Wadsworth Blvd south past west entrance to Chatfield SP to Waterton Canyon Road. Turn left and take the first left into parking lot for Discovery Pavilion. Gather at Stone House.

Learn to ID birds by sound using mnemonic techniques. We will look and listen for singing Lazuli Bunting, Yellow Warbler, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, American Dipper, Canyon Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, Spotted Towhee, and late migrants.

Green Mountain Falls Sunday, May 26 5:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 8

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock near the outlet stores.

Carpool to Green Mountain Falls (about 1-hour drive from meet-up). Hike 4 miles roundtrip with some elevation gain, waterfalls and great scenery. Look for typical mountain birds, including Steller's Jay, Evening Grosbeak and perhaps Band-Tailed

May Field Trips Continued...

Pigeon. Bring lunch, water, and sun protection. Scopes welcome but be prepared to carry 4 miles.

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Sunday, May 26

6:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail difficulty: easy

Directions: Meet at parking strip beneath spruce trees on northeast side of Ferril Lake in City Park (see website for details).

Kick off summer with all three large waterbird species that nest (and hatch young) on the islands in Ferril and Duck lakes. We'll count and observe the cormorants, herons and egrets for DFO's citizen science project – but we'll also roam the rest of the park for summer arrivals, late migrants and other nesters (including hawks and woodpeckers). Bring a scope if you have one for closer looks at nesters. We'll walk about 3 miles on flat paths, sidewalks and lawns.

Washington Park, Denver

Sunday, May 26

7:30 – 11 a.m.

Colleen Nunn

Email: cnunn6789@gmail.com

Phone: 303-520-7496)

Trail difficulty: easy

Directions: Enter park from east at South Franklin Street at East Arizona Avenue. From parking lot walk south to Grasmere Lake and meet near island.

This trip starts at the Grasmere Lake nesting site in Washington Park, one of four public metro Denver locations in the DFO Colonial Waterbirds citizen-science project. Expect to see nesting Black-crowned Night-herons, Snowy Egrets, and Double-crested Cormorants. After checking nests and young, we'll continue around Grasmere and other parks of the park to the north in search of warblers and other passerines. Bring scope if you have one.

Bar CCC Park / Rueter-Hess Reservoir Wednesday, May 29

6 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Tim Ryan & Diane Roberts

Email: Tryan4thebirds@yahoo.com

Phone: 720-545-5084

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 9

Directions: Bar CCC Park is at 10951 S. Twenty Mile Road, Parker, CO. Exit from I-25 to Ridgeway Parkway heading east. Ridgeway becomes Main Street in Parker. Turn right on Twenty Mile Road, then right again into dirt parking lot.

Begin field trip at Bar CCC Park, then take short bus ride courtesy of Parker Water Department to city's drinking water source, Rueter-Hess Reservoir. Because of reservoir site security, participants must remain the entire time, with no early departures permitted. Scopes helpful. Afterwards, feel free to join in lunch with group members.

Sedalia to Cheesman

Thursday, May 30

6 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Chris Blakeslee & Paul Slingsby

Email: ChrisABla@aol.com

Phone: 303-694-4670

Trail difficulty: moderate

Maximum participants: 10

Meet at the U.S. Post Office in Sedalia, Douglas County. Directions: Take Hwy 85 south to Highway 67. Turn southwest and drive into and through Sedalia. Cross 2 major sets of railroad tracks. Post office is on the northwest (right) side of Hwy 67.

Trip will target seven woodpecker species including American Three-toed and Lewis's, and other nesting mountain species. We will bird in Douglas and Jefferson counties including in the Hayman Fire burn area. Off-trail walking in moderate terrain for 1-2 miles with minimal elevation gain. Bring lunch, water, sun protection.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2019)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Vacant	
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
-----------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

April 22, 2019

Nathan Pieplow

The Secret Lives of Ducks

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐	Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	25
☐	Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	60
☐	Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$	10
☐	Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$	_____
Total			\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JUNE 2019/VOL 55 NO 6

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)



Brown Thrasher
Credit: Chuck Hundertmark

Moving Forward

From the President Dave Hill

DFO's leadership has changed! Who'd have known it? The transition has been smooth and innocuous. Ongoing programs, field trips and workshops all remain in place thanks to DFO's Board of Directors and cast of willing and dedicated volunteers, each of whom has given mightily of their time and energy to maintain the continuity of this wonderful bird club. We are truly fortunate to have this outstanding organization in our community providing free field trips & programs, The Lark Bunting newsletter, a great website, workshops, grants promoting bird conservation, and more! Importantly, this happens only because of the overwhelming and unending generosity of DFO members and our volunteer community. DFO's leadership has changed but our institution prevails.

I congratulate immediate Past President, Chuck Hundertmark and the DFO Board for a very successful term with many valued accomplishments, including the ongoing update of DFO's website, the electronic Lark Bunting, the Big Year, and Knowledge & Learning workshops. During this past year, Chuck did many things to show his support for me as his successor. I am thankful for that, but caution him that I will be depending on his continued support ahead!

I would also like to congratulate each of the new officers and Board members and thank the Board and DFO members for showing its confidence in us through our election to our respective positions. I have already seen the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment that each member brings to the Board and I am delighted in serving as President. We will continue working with DFO's ongoing development and continue to maintain DFO as the best bird club ever!

Wish us well!



DFO ANNUAL PICNIC

Bringing birders and
bratwurst together
since 2016

By Tom Behnfield and Pat O'Driscoll

DFO is returning to the ever-popular Prospect Park in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt for a day of fun and fellowship with some of your best birding buddies on June 8 for the Fourth Annual DFO Members Only Picnic. And like last year, the grilled goodies and beverages are on DFO!

Rather than charging a set price for the potluck picnic, we are asking you to donate to the DFO Research, Education & Conservation Fund. All donations made at the picnic will be used to fund projects in three areas of interest:

- Education that supports knowledge of birds
- Research in ornithology
- Conservation of birds and their habitats

You can find more information on the [DFO Recreation, Education and Conservation Fund on our website](#).

Prospect Park is just off 44th Avenue west of Kipling Boulevard. [Directions can be found here](#). Plan to arrive at 7:30 a.m. if you would like to participate in birding hikes in memory of Jackie King, who passed away last year and led numerous birding trips to this great location. Paths throughout the park are paved and fully accessible.

The picnic itself begins at 11 a.m. DFO has rented a covered pavilion with picnic tables and will provide picnickers with bratwursts and beverages. A vegetarian option will be available if you notify us when you RSVP. As this is a potluck picnic, we also ask that each adult bring a dish for eight people to share. Here are the assignments:

- Last name beginning with A – H: Salad
- Last names beginning with I – Q: Side dish
- Last names beginning with R – Z: Dessert

Please plan to arrive with your potluck item by 11 a.m. so there's time to set it out before lunch is served. Two important things to remember:

- The picnic is for DFO members and immediate family or “plus one” guests, not the general public.
- If you are not yet a member, there is still time to join and attend the picnic.

Please RSVP by June 5th using the [online form](#) or by texting picnic chair Tom Behnfield at 303-910-6858.

Better Birding Workshops in June

Bird Song Workshop Set for June 1-2

As of the newsletter deadline, there was only one spot remaining in the workshop, *Learning Bird Sounds: Urban Riparian Songs*. Instructors will be Chuck Hundertmark and Karen Drozda are leading this workshop on Saturday and Sunday, June 1&2. Learn more and register for the workshop on the [Programs page of the DFO web site](#).

eBird Workshop scheduled for June 29

Become a better birder by using all the amazing features of eBird. Keeping track of all your birds is just one of the many birding tasks that eBird can do for you. It is the amazing application that decades of birders have wished for.

Gregg Goodrich, eBird aficionado and author of a yearlong series of articles in *The Lark Bunting* on the many features of eBird, will offer a workshop to help those new to eBird learn how to use the application. The workshop is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on June 29, 2019 at Barr Lake Nature Center. Attendance will be limited to 24.

Register on the [Programs page of the DFO web site](#). Gregg will review the eBird app in the workshop and then have a short hands-on field trip so you can learn to use it. Also, Merlin ID, a free mobile field guide is available from eBird and is integrated into eBird Mobile. We will learn to use eBird Mobile in the workshop.

DFO FORMS CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The Board of DFO has voted to create a Conservation Committee to fulfill the part of the DFO mission to promote the *preservation of birds and their habitat*. The committee will be charged with assessing conservation issues as they arise and recommending appropriate Board action. In addition, the committee may develop conservation education activities, such as informative newsletter articles about conservation projects or presenters for DFO monthly programs.

Any member of DFO in good standing can volunteer to serve on the Conservation Committee. A chairperson for the committee will be selected from among those who show interest in the committee. Contact [Bea Weaver](#), DFO Nominating Committee Chair, for more information and to indicate your interest or fill out the [online form](#) and write in Conservation Committee.

Welcome to New DFO Members

Deborah Bates, Littleton; Susan Bowles, Denver; Susan Cable, Highlands Ranch; Scott Caruso, Lakewood; Virginia Eiseman, Denver; Barbara Jean Gard, Evergreen; Sabrina Hepburn, Lakewood; Kathy Holland, Centennial; Jeremy Martinez, Littleton; Tim Seastedt, Broomfield; Laura Steadman, Boulder; James E Thompson, Denver; Natalie Vande Vuss, Morrison

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Susan Cable, Kathy Holland, Tim Seastedt



Green Mountain Area Homeschool students meeting with Jane Goodall

Green Mountain Area Homeschoolers present 50 Birds in Lakewood

By Reed Gorner, Green Mountain Area Homeschoolers

If you asked a kid to identify a problem in their community, what would they say? There are so many issues that need attention in cities and communities, that it might be hard to choose. But, if kids around the world did chose to help solve or reduce the problems they think are important, what would happen?

Green Mountain Area Homeschoolers has decided to focus its annual service learning project, *50 Birds in Lakewood*, around the bird life in Lakewood, specifically on American Kestrels.

In Colorado, the American Kestrel population is in decline. This decline could be caused by multiple factors including loss of habitat and nesting spots, exposure to dangerous pesticides, and less food to go around. They need good places to lay eggs and raise young. These places and the surrounding habitats are shrinking and making it harder for kestrels to find safe places to lay eggs. The students hope to raise awareness, not only for kestrels, but for the diverse avian population in the community.

The group is tying the 50th anniversary of the founding of the City of Lakewood into the project. Several parts of *50 Birds in Lakewood* are already underway and others are in the planning stages. The project will build and place 50 nest boxes for kestrels around Lakewood. To help spread the word about the project, an art exhibit featuring the work of 50 students depicting 50 birds commonly seen around Lakewood will be on display at Belmar Library from May 15 through mid-July.

In conjunction with the art show, the students will kick off a bird identification contest. The goal is to have kids in and around Lakewood go out and look for these birds. The hope is to increase youth understanding of the diversity and importance of bird life in the community. Kids can pick up checklists of the 50 birds at Belmar Library or the Wild Birds Unlimited store at Wadsworth and Yale.

Wild Birds Unlimited in Lakewood is partnering with the homeschool group on the identification contest. They will be giving out free bags of birdseed to contest participants and are also helping with some of the prizes for the drawing at the end of the contest. The contest runs from May 15 through July 31.

Green Mountain Area Homeschoolers have been doing service projects through the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots and Shoots program since 2014. The program provides a framework to encourage students to identify a problem in their community and work to solve or reduce the problem. Previous projects include planting milkweed for monarchs, habitat restoration, and water conservation and cleanup. Since 2015, Green Mountain Area Homeschoolers have won four City of Lakewood Sustainability Awards for "Youth Defender of the Planet".

Help the students with this year's "50 Birds In Lakewood" project, by encouraging the youth you know to enter the contest. If you are able to provide a place to distribute the contest flyers, have questions, or would like to help out in any way, please contact Sarah Gorner of Green Mountain Area Homeschoolers at gorner5@msn.com. Thanks in advance for your support!

Reed Gorner is a 15-year-old homeschooled high school student. He enjoys helping with local summer bird camps, bird banding, and is currently first place in the Denver Audubon Big Year.

June: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

By Ira Sanders

In June, the average high in Denver is 86 degrees and the average low is 54 degrees, up 15 and 10 degrees on the high and low from May, although it reached 104 in 1994 and fell to 30 in 1951. Historically, June starts eastern Colorado's tornado season, marked by severe thunderstorms and high winds. In 1977, a tornado in southeastern Colorado produced 260 mph winds and on June 13, 1984; hailstones as big as grapefruits fell on Denver causing 500 million dollars in damage.

As June rolls in, the migration of passerines has ended and the local birds are nesting and feeding young. **Chestnut-collared** and **McCown's Longspurs** are nesting on the Pawnee Grasslands and although the McCown's are easier to find, the Chestnut-collared are there if you know to look in the taller grass. One such area is southeast of the intersection of US Hwy 85 and Weld County Road 114, near the U.S.D.A. High Plains Research Station. You are allowed to walk in that pasture, as I have done many times in the past, as long as you don't disturb any research projects and close the gate behind you. Look for the black "V" inside the white tail feathers and the all-black under parts of the male as he skylarks overhead.

While you are in the area, head east to shorter grass for the McCown's Longspur while watching for **Burrowing Owl**, **Brewer's** and **Grasshopper Sparrows** as well as **Loggerhead Shrike**. **Baird's Sparrow** has also been seen in this area.

Orchard Orioles are not the easiest bird to find on the Front Range, but I have consistently found them at

Barr Lake State Park, just off I-76 east of Brighton. The meadow west of the Nature Center footbridge near the Neidrach Trail is a good place, as well as the open area east of the banding station and west of the Pioneer Trail. Don't forget to watch the prairie east of the Denver-Hudson Canal for **Bullock's** and **Orchard Orioles** but don't rule out **Baltimore Oriole** either as the Bullock's eastern cousin has also been seen here in recent years. **Blue Grosbeaks** have been seen here since 2008 in the prairie and along the canal north and east of the footbridge.

As you may want to bird in the mountains to escape the early summer heat and see birds that don't normally nest on the front range, the Alfred M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area in the Arapaho National Forest is a mecca in the mountains for high altitude birds. Nesting birds include: **Red-naped** and **Williamson's Sapsuckers**, **3-toed Woodpecker**, **Olive-sided**, **Dusky** and **Cordilleran Flycatchers**, **Gray** and **Steller's Jays**, **Red** and **White-breasted Nuthatches**, **MacGillivray's Warbler** and **Fox**, **Lincoln's** and **White-crowned Sparrows**. You may also find **Pine Grosbeak**, **Cassin's Finch** and **Red Crossbill**.

To get there, take I-70 to exit 205 (Dillon) and take Hwy 9 north for 7.4 miles and turn left on Rock Creek Road. Drive 1.2 miles west to a sign for Rock Creek Trailhead where you turn left and continue for 1.5 miles to the parking area. This road is steep and narrow and not recommended for trailers. Hike the Rock Creek Trail for ½ mile to one of several paths that will take you into the 7-acre meadow. Make sure you take lots of bug spray or even mosquito netting as this area is great for birds but also for biting and sucking bugs.

Hepatic Tanager is a Colorado rarity that is becoming easier to find in the state. They are gaining a foothold near Kim, Colorado on a private ranch, but a public area where they were found in 2003 is just off I-25 at exit 42 south of Walsenburg. There is a road on the west side of the highway at this exit that goes south for a short

Continued on page 6



Mountain Plover (Credit: Jim Esten)

BIRDS TO LOOK FOR cont. from page 5

distance and then curves west and crosses railroad tracks. Park here and watch the trees to the north of the road for the tanagers. While you are in the area, and have already made the trek to the southern part of the state, be sure to stop and bird at Lathrop State Park west of Walsenburg on Hwy 160. Just watch out for bears while you are there walking through the junipers.

Although the hectic pace of May is behind us, rarities still show up in Colorado as evidenced by the Lawrence's Goldfinch that was in Grand Junction in 2007.

On an entomological note, fireflies can be found in late June and early July in Colorado in muggy wetlands at lower elevations. The Colorado Nature Almanac tells me that these reminders of my childhood in Illinois can be found at: Valley View Hot Springs at the north end of San Luis Valley (largest population of fireflies in the state); Comanche National Grassland, Picture Canyon, south of Springfield; Bonny State Wildlife Area north of Burlington on the south shore of the reservoir; Roxborough State Park southeast of Denver; and Sawhill and Walden Ponds in Boulder. Again, remember the bug spray. If the fireflies are out so are their relatives.

If you have suggestions for any months yet to come for anywhere in the state, please feel free to email them to me at zroadrunner14@gmail.com. All suggestions and contributions are gratefully accepted.

April Program Review

By Tim Johnson

On Earth Day, April 22, DFO members flocked to hear Nathan Pieplow speak about *The Secret Lives of Ducks*. Pieplow's multifaceted activities include being associate faculty director of the Global Residential Academic Program at the University of Colorado Boulder, teaching writing and rhetoric, and researching bird song. He is author of the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*, the western volume of which was just published. It is accompanied by an enormous [sound library](#) that you can try online.

As the title of Pieplow's presentation suggests, he introduced the audience to some poorly known duck anatomy and behavior. He began by reading *Ducks*, possibly the most famous poem by World War I veteran and poet Frank W. Harvey. Accompanying Pieplow's reading were projected images of many duck species, including Mallard, Canvasback, and Hooded Merganser, interspersed with recorded Mallard quacks. He finished with a recording of a large variety of un-quacklike Colorado duck sounds. The reading's purpose was to contrast the conventional picture of ducks as comical, quaint creatures that make funny noises with the dark reality of violence in the sex lives of ducks.

To drive home his point, Pieplow described the common phenomenon of rape in many duck species. Male ducks will often force sex on a female that has already chosen her mate. A more scientific label for this behavior is "forced extra-pair copulation." In response, a "genital arms race" has occurred in which both sexes have evolved elaborate genitalia with opposing purposes. (For more detailed information, you might read *The Evolution of Beauty* by Richard O. Prum). This enables females to exert some control over which males fertilize their eggs. In fact, only about three percent of forced copulations result in fertilization. In the meantime, these aggressive attempts at mating can injure or even kill females.

The prelude to reproductive sex normally involves courtship, and Pieplow went on to discuss the extraordinarily rich mating behavior of duck species. He said pairing begins in early fall for North American ducks and courtship happens all winter. Pair bonds, however, last only until eggs are laid, and do not carry forward from year to year.

Pieplow emphasized that what looks to humans like preening or random movements can actually be carefully choreographed courtship rituals. To dramatize this point, he passed out "Mallard courtship bingo cards" that showed various movements and postures, then challenged the audience to identify them in a video of Mallards. I found this the best part of his talk. I'll never look at a pair or group of ducks again the same way. Best of all, every duck species has its own suite of behaviors.

The last sections of Pieplow's presentation described two duck behaviors with different underlying reasons. The first, which he called "egg-dumping," depicted the behavior of the Wood Duck and some other duck species whose females lay eggs in the nests of unrelated females of the same species. Although single Wood Duck females may lay up to 12 eggs, as many as 48 eggs have been found in a single nest. Pieplow said that from an evolutionary standpoint, egg-dumping could be a hedge against predation.

He noted two intriguing aspects of this behavior: the host duck's own eggs survive at a higher rate than those of the egg-dumping females, and egg-dumping as a successful breeding strategy depends upon the ducklings being precocial, meaning that they are born able to see, forage for food and swim. Chicks whose parents have vanished, whether through predation or temperament may latch onto another family. To illustrate, Pieplow showed a picture of 54 Common Merganser chicks following one female in single file.

The second duck behavior – in this case an ability – Pieplow called "constant vigilance." It is based on the observation that ducks apparently can "sleep" half of their brain at a time. He cited evidence that, in a large group of sleeping ducks, those in the center will sleep completely with both eyes shut, while each duck on the periphery will have its outward-facing eye open, suggesting at least semi-alertness. Pieplow said it is possible that this ability could enable long-distance migrants such as godwits to sleep on the wing.

Pieplow said he had given presentations to DFO for at least seven consecutive years. I'm not surprised. I'm already looking forward to next year's engaging talk, whatever its subject may be.

June Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. July field trips will appear on the website on June 1 and August field trips will appear on July 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

*** denotes a Spring Bird Count field trip.**

**Mt. Falcon Park
Jefferson County
Saturday, June 1
6:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

John Breitsch
Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com
Phone: 303-588-0552
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Directions: Meet at upper parking lot of west side of Mount Falcon Park. CASTLE TRAIL to WALKER'S DREAM TRAIL: At the end of the WD Trail there are fabulous views. We will explore ponderosa pine woodlands for nesting birds. We could see Cordilleran Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo, Mountain and Western Bluebird, three nuthatches, Western Tanager, etc. There will be an early portion for anyone that cares to join me. I will leave the parking lot at 4:00 AM and do a quick loop up to the Tower Trail and back.

**Ken Caryl Valley Area
Saturday, June 1
6:30 PM - 9:30 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

Visit private Ken Caryl Ranch and adjacent parklands on this evening visit to explore the hogback areas and watch and listen as evening settles over the area. We'll pay attention to the dusk chorus and after sunset we will focus on hearing and probably seeing Common Poorwill. We will carpool from the meeting place and may walk a mile or two on mostly gentle slopes.

**Bluff Lake Nature Center
Sunday, June 2
7:30 AM - 12:30 PM**

Megan Miller
Megan.k.miller2473@gmail.com
Phone: 720-775-9710
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at Bluff Lake Nature Center. Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat: wetland, yucca, and large cottonwoods. This attracts a variety of raptors and songbirds. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. Paths are easy walking trails. We'll be walking 1-1.5 miles. Scopes are optional.

**Golden Gate Canyon State Park
Monday, June 3
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

Mark Amershek
Email: mammershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Golden Gate Canyon SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will make short hikes, but they may be steep in places. Bring lunch. We will carpool from the starting point just north of Golden.

**Bailey Nesting Area
Summit County
Thursday, June 6
5:30 AM - 5:00 PM**

Paul Slingsby & Chris Blakeslee

Email: paslingsby@comcast.net
Phone: 720-347-5169 mobile
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the lower end of the Stegosaurus Park-n-Ride off I-70.

The trailhead road can be driven by most passenger cars. The walking trail is a moderately steep 4-wheel drive road with some off-trail walking. We will walk less than 3 miles with minimal altitude gain. We hope to see mountain nesting species and will likely find nests. Moose have been seen in this area. Bring lunch.

**Upper Beaver Meadows Rocky Mountain National Park
Friday, June 7
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

Bill Wuerthele
Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com
Phone: 303-333-2519
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead parking area.

This will be a loop hike of just under five miles with an elevation gain and loss of approximately 1,000 feet. Bring lunch. Possible species include: N. Goshawk, Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsuckers and Dusky Grouse. Carpooling to the park is recommended.

**Roxborough State Park
Sunday, June 9
7:30 AM - 10:00 AM**

Alison Kondler
Email: birdtrills@gmail.com
Phone: 303-904-9140
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 6

Directions: Meet at Roxborough State Park. State Parks pass or day pass required.

June Field Trips Continued...

Learn to ID birds by sound using mnemonic based techniques on a 1.5-mile, guided bird hike. Expect a few hills, but overall an easy hike. Please note: This is a shared event with Roxborough State Park's public. You are encouraged to sign up on the DFO waiting list. It is possible that up to six more spots will open two days prior to this field trip. Meet outside on the patio of the visitor center. Lunch optional.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop Arapahoe County Sunday, June 9

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881)
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

Rocky Mountain National Park Larimer County Tuesday, June 11

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Mark Amershek
Email: mammershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the RMNP Visitor Center parking lot east of the RMNP Beaver Meadows entrance station on U.S. 36.

This will be a 3/4 to all-day trip to Rocky Mountain NP, depending on weather and birds. Plan to carpool. Drivers need a parks pass. Bring lunch and dress for changeable

weather. Several stops with easy to moderate hiking. Possible birds are Mountain Bluebird, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Lincoln's Sparrow, flycatchers, and woodpeckers, including Williamson's Sapsucker.

Pine Valley Ranch Saturday, June 15 6:30 AM - 11:30 AM

John Breitsch
Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com
Phone: 303-588-0552
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: The park address is 30400 Crystal Lake Road Pine Grove, CO 80470.

The habitats at PVR include Ponderosa Forest, willows, and mixed-conifer forest. The ranch has hosted nesting Common Mergansers for several years. The primary objective for this trip is to see if we can find some young mergansers hanging around behind or on top of momma. After exploring the lake area, we will venture out on the trails in search of woodpeckers, vireos, warblers, flycatchers, and a hawk or two. I will be at the park at 04:31 am (an hour before sunrise, when they open) to do a bit of pre-trip birding for anyone who doesn't feel like sleeping.

First Creek at Denver Open Space Sunday, June 16 6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From east Denver north of I-70, go east on 56th Avenue past Peoria and Chambers toward Peña Boulevard (airport highway). About 2 blocks before Peña, parking is on left (green sign, fenced lot).

Summer resident songbirds, raptors, grassland species and more will be settling in on both sides of the

Buckley Road border between the DEN Open Space and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR First Creek Trail. Expect to walk 3-4 miles of both paved and dirt-gravel trail. No restrooms at this location, so "go before you go" at the King Soopers off Tower Road near 49th.

Boulder County Friday, June 21 6:00 AM - 11:00 AM

John Malenich
Email: john.malenich@comcast.net
Phone: 303-359-9456 cell
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the northwest corner of the parking lot of the King Soopers at 1650 30th St., Boulder.

We will visit a few locations in central Boulder County to be determined by recent sightings. Possible locations include: CU East Campus, Walden Ponds, Teller Lakes, Old S. St. Vrain Rd. in Lyons, Green Mountain Cemetery, Walden Ponds, or Lagerman Reservoir. Plan for a few miles of walking on level trails. Bring a scope, if you have one.

Lair o' the Bear Park Jefferson County Sunday, June 23 6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Lair o' the Bear Park, west of Morrison on Bear Creek Road (Hwy 74)

The park should be abuzz with nesting, feeding, and fledging activity of dippers, flycatchers, vireos, grosbeaks, goldfinches, hummingbirds and more. Trails are narrow in spots, with about 200 feet of elevation gain and loss on the loop

June Field Trips Continued...

away from and above Bear Creek. Expect to walk up to 3 miles, and we may share the trail with others on foot, bicycle and horseback.

Mt. Evans area via Squaw Pass Rd

Tuesday, June 25

7:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mammershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at King Soopers which is 1.8 miles from the Evergreen Hwy 74 exit number 252 off of 170. Turn left at the stop light on Bergen Parkway King Soopers 1173 Bergen Parkway.

We will drive up Mt Evans as high as Summit Lake. In this very diverse habitat of spruce, fir, aspen, we will look for Pine Grosbeak, Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, and possibly ptarmigan and sapsuckers. Please prepare for an all-day mountain trip with appropriate clothing. Lunch at Echo Lake Park, where Barrow's Goldeneye and American Three-toed Woodpecker and all four hummingbirds can be seen.

Beaver Brook Trail

Thursday, June 27

5:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Paul Slingsby

Email: paslingsby@comcast.net

Phone: 720-347-5169 mobile

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the lower end of the Stegosaurus Park-n-Ride off I-70. We will carpool from there.

We will descend 1,200 feet on Beaver Brooke Trail through riparian mixed Douglass fir, ponderosa and aspen forest until we meet Chavez trail. We return 1,200 feet up by Chavez Trail which has two areas of moderate exposure and some steep

rocky sections. Total distance over 5 miles. We'll take time to look for nests or fledglings of flycatchers, vireos, nuthatches and other mountain birds.

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Friday, June 28

6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

Visit private Ken Caryl Ranch and adjacent parklands on this evening visit to explore the hogback areas and watch and listen as evening settles over the area. We'll pay attention to the dusk chorus and after sunset as we will focus on hearing and probably seeing Common Poorwill. We will carpool from the meeting place and may walk a mile or two on mostly gentle slopes.

Peak to Peak Highway

Sunday, June 30

5:30 AM - 3:30 PM

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456 cell

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Boulder County Justice Center, 1777 6th St., Boulder

We will bird at a number of locations along the Peak to Peak Scenic Highway from Nederland to Estes Park in search of mountain species. A visit to the Brainard Lake Rec. Area (Entry Fee or Pass required) may be included. We will be carpool from the meeting location so be prepared to drive with a full tank of

gas or share in mileage costs. Plan for a few miles of walking, with some uphill & rocky trails. Be prepared for cooler temperatures and a variety of weather. Bring a lunch and a scope, if you have one.

DFO Field Trip: SW New Mexico (August 17-24)

Most Denver Field Ornithologists field trips are posted on the DFO website on the first of the month, one month ahead of the month in which the trip will occur. This gives members at least a month and more to plan their participation in local day trips as well as two-day, out-of-town excursions.

For longer, multi-day outings – known as Extended Out-of-State or EOS trips – DFO advertises birding trips farther in advance to give prospective participants more lead time to fit a longer trip into their personal schedules.

In mid-August, DFO plans an EOS field trip to southwest New Mexico. The main base of operations for this Aug. 17-24 excursion will be Silver City, NM. There will be stops along the way to and from Silver City, including Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, canyons in the Magdalena Mountains, Percha Dam State Park and Emory Pass in Gila National Forest, among others. Once settled in the southwest corner of the state, the group will visit locations including Pinos Altos, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, Lake Roberts, Virden, and a few others.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Vice President	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2022)	behnfield@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2022)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com
Bea Weaver (2022)	beamiami@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Bea Weaver	beamiami@aol.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
-----------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

Upcoming Meetings:

August 26

September 23

October 28

November 25

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----|-------|
| ☐ | Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ | Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 60 |
| ☐ | Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ | Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total	\$	_____
-------	----	-------

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JULY AND AUGUST 2019/VOL 55 NO 7-8

DFOBIRDS.ORG

Volunteering for DFO and its Surprising Benefits



House Wren
Credit: Jim Esten

From the President Dave Hill

Busy birders may find it hard to find time to volunteer, but the benefits to you, your family and the birding community are monumental. Giving to others can, in fact, enhance your health and well-being. An agreeable, volunteer match can help one reduce stress, find friends, learn new skills, increase self-confidence, provide a sense of purpose and connect with like-minded individuals.

Research has shown that adults with disabilities or chronic health conditions all show improvement after volunteering. Many choose to volunteer their time via phone or computer, which means that a disability, lack of transportation, or limited time is not a constraint.

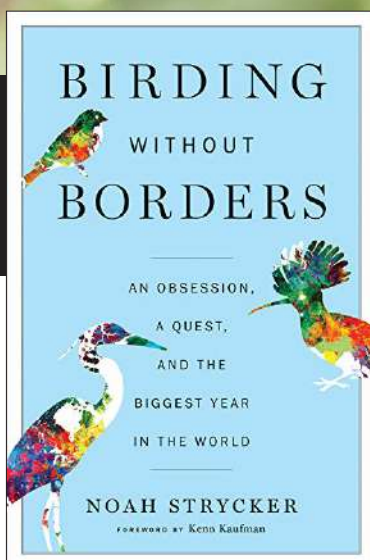
Volunteering does not have to involve a huge amount of time out of your busy day. Research shows that just two to three hours per week can confer the most benefit. Volunteering does not need to involve a long-term commitment either. Choosing to do even the simplest tasks when your schedule permits still helps in all respects. Most importantly, give the amount of time that feels comfortable to you and your effort will be both fun and rewarding.

DFO operations are completed entirely by volunteer members. Our free field trips are organized and led solely by members who give of their time. All 16 members of DFO's board are member volunteers. Our committees, represented by each board member, are entirely composed of volunteers. This wonderful organization thrives only because members give of themselves so generously.

See for yourself! You might be surprised. Simply scroll to the bottom of the [DFO website's home page](#), enter your name and email address on the form and select the "Volunteering" button. I will receive an email to indicate your interest. I will be happy to discuss how you'd like to be a part of this very special team. I look forward to hearing from you!



Sword-billed Hummingbird



Birding Without Borders

Noah Strycker
Tuesday, July 16, 7 p.m.
Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Named a “Travel Pioneer” by the BBC and the “Birdman of Razzmatazz” by Newsweek, Noah Strycker is a writer, photographer, and bird man. In 2015, Strycker set himself a lofty goal: to become the first person to see half the planet’s birds in one year. For 365 days, with a backpack, binoculars, and a series of one-way tickets, he traveled across 41 countries and all seven continents, eventually spotting 6,042 species—by far the biggest birding year on record.

In his book *Birding Without Borders*, Strycker ventures deep into a world of bloodsucking leeches, chronic sleep deprivation, airline snafus, breakdowns, mudslides, floods, war zones, ecological devastation, conservation triumphs, common and iconic species, and scores of passionate bird lovers around the globe. He offers a hopeful message that although many birds face an uncertain future, more people than ever are working to protect them.

A book sale and signing will follow the presentation. This program is presented by DMNS in partnership with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies with promotional support from Audubon Society of Greater Denver and Audubon Rockies.

Admission:

\$12 museum, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and Audubon members, \$15 nonmembers

<https://secure1.dmns.org/birding-without-borders>

July: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding. In this issue we include both July and August guides.

By Ira Sanders

In July, the average high temperature in Denver is 92 degrees and the average low is 61 degrees, up six and seven degrees on the high and low from June. The average high appears to have increased four degrees in the past 10 years. It has reached 104, just as in June, and has fallen to 43. The state record high of 114 degrees was set in July 1933 in Las Animas and equaled in 1954 in Sedgwick.

July is an interesting and dangerous month for weather. On July 4, 1995, 6 inches of snow fell on Mount Evans. Major rainstorms in July can be deadly. The most devastating storm in modern Colorado history was probably the one on July 31, 1976. A torrential downpour over Estes Park dropped 12 inches of rain, causing the Big Thompson River to rise 10 feet and flood its banks in only minutes. Big Thompson Canyon was devastated and 139 people died. On July 28, 1997, a stalled thunderstorm inundated Fort Collins with 13 inches of rain. The ensuing flood washed away a trailer park and killed five people.

Speaking of Mount Evans, July is a good time to look for **Brown-capped Rosy-finches** and **American Pipits** that nest on the tundra there. While you are there, watch for **White-tailed Ptarmigan** in their mottled plumage leading chicks through the tundra grasses and flowers. Other good places for ptarmigan are on Guanella Pass, Loveland Pass, or above the visitor center on Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park.

In Castlewood Canyon State Park near Franktown southeast of Denver, vireos and warblers are possible.

Ovenbird nests at higher elevations in ponderosa pine forest at this location, among others. Just south of Castlewood, watch and listen for **Dickcissel** and **Bobolink**. The latter can also be found around Boulder County, particularly on Cherry Vale Road. Dickcissel can be widespread on the Colorado plains. Make sure to check the wires and shrubs near alfalfa fields while you listen for “dick, dick, ciss, ciss, ciss.”

Shorebirds begin returning from the Arctic in late July. Watch any mudflats you can find for these long distance migrants. Beebee Draw, the mudflats south of Lower Latham Reservoir, and Barr Lake are good places for shorebirds, depending on the water level.

My contributing birders overwhelmingly mentioned hummingbirds as the birds to watch for in July, especially along the Front Range. Your hummingbird feeders should already be out to catch these little guys on their southward migration. **Rufous Hummingbirds** will start showing up first and **Calliope Hummingbirds** will follow. If you see a hummer in the plains away from the foothills and mountains, check to see if it isn't a **Black-chinned Hummingbird**, which has been expanding its nesting range, and has even been seen along the Front Range foothills. Even **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** can be seen from time to time on the eastern plains.

Hummers of all four species, including the not yet mentioned **Broad-tailed Hummingbird**, can be found far from the foothills in fall migration. I've seen them at Lake Jackson in Morgan County in late summer.

Mid-July is when hummers increase in numbers. The adults will appear first, followed by the immatures. Check any feeders that you see; many restaurants and hotels in the mountains maintain feeders. Also watch for any “big” hummers as post-breeding wandering occurs and a big one, a **Magnificent** or **Blue-throated**, could pop up anywhere.

Continued on page 4

Three-toed Woodpeckers may be the easiest to find in July, when they are most active feeding their young. This species is more commonly associated with spruce and lodgepole pine, particularly if the trees are diseased. Look for trees where the bark has flaked off. This indicates Three-toed activity. Rocky Mountain National Park is a good viewing location, particularly Wild Basin. The campground at the base of Mount Evans is one location where I have seen them and White Ranch Park in Jefferson County is another place to look. Also look in conifer forests affected by forest fires.

Keep your ears open for the Three-toed call, something in between **Hairy** and **Downy Woodpecker**, and fairly slow drumming that tails off at the end. Hairy Woodpecker drumming is faster and the call sharper.

Black Swifts can be easier to see in July when they also are feeding their young. Hanging Lake in Glenwood Canyon (where you now need reservations to hike), Rifle Falls (*Delorme Colorado Atlas & Gazetteer*, 34 C4), and Box Canyon in the town of Ouray are good places to observe these birds.

Good birding!

August: What birds to look for and where to look for them

By Ira Sanders

In August, the average high temperature in Denver is 90 degrees and the average low is 59 degrees, both down two degrees the July averages. Although it has reached 101 degrees and has fallen to 41, the average high risen four degrees in the past 10 years. Although it won't feel like it, August is just a little cooler than July. Severe weather is still a threat in August as thunderstorms persist everywhere in the state. In 1984 on Longs Peak, a tornado touched down at 11,400 feet. This was most likely the highest elevation tornado in U.S. history.

August is still a great time for **Black Swifts** at Ouzel Falls in Rocky Mountain National Park and on the west side of Wolf Creek Pass. At Wolf Creek Pass you may see the swifts from the overlook or at the falls area at the base of the pass.

Mid to late-August is a good time to start looking for fall warblers. You don't have to contend with the large flocks of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** yet so you don't have to pick through many birds in a flock. Barr Lake State Park is a good migrant trap in the fall. In 2006 and 2007, the area around the banding station was one spot in the state where **Canada Warbler** was found. Keep your eyes open for this skulking rarity if you visit the banding station, just a short walk east of the Nature Center footbridge.

Meredith McBurney does the banding and you can get "bird in the hand" looks at many species. Go early in the day, as the banding is usually done by 11 a.m.

Barr Lake can also be a great place for migrating shorebirds if the water is low enough. During the drought this was a great place for shorebirds, but as you have heard, the drought is over for now. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** seems to show up every year here if the conditions are right and late August through mid-September is the time to look for them. Beware of buffy-looking **Baird's Sandpipers** but the shape of the bird (GISS – general impression of size and shape) is very different. Read up on these two before heading into the field, as well as how to separate **Semipalmated** and **Western Sandpipers**.

Crow Valley Campground on the Pawnee National Grasslands near Briggsdale is another very good migrant trap. If you go to Prewitt Reservoir for shorebirds, check out the inlet canal area at the west end of the reservoir for passerines. This is another spot where Canada Warbler has been found in the past.

You can find shorebirds in the Lower Latham Reservoir area, including Beebe Draw to the south of Lower Latham. Prewitt Reservoir and Jackson Lake State Park

Continued on page 5



Hermit Warbler seen at Varsity Lake in Boulder
Credit: Chuck Hundertmark

AUGUST BIRDS TO LOOK FOR cont. from page 4

can both be good for up to 25 species of shorebird. In the past, several hundred **Mountain Plover** have been seen gathering for migration in mid-August at the north side of Jackson Lake. Although you won't need a scope for the Mountain Plover, bring a scope for the mudflats or all you'll see are the large shorebirds. As noted above, your success with shorebirds will depend on water levels in lakes and reservoirs. During the drought, shorebird sighting was very good, but if the mudflats aren't there, your chances of seeing lots of shorebirds are slim.

Another place that always seems to draw shorebirds is John Martin Reservoir, 25 miles west of Lamar. The size of the reservoir seems to guarantee mudflats and shorebirds. Bonny State Wildlife Area north of Burlington, formerly a state park, can also be very good. But I don't know what it's like these days since Kansas won the legal right to take the water that was in the lake. Wherever you try, watch for **White-rumped Sandpipers** and remember that **American Golden Plovers**, **Upland Sandpipers** and **Long-billed Curlews** aren't always in the mud but can be seen in shortgrass prairie.

The first week of August seems to be the high point of hummingbird migration on the Front Range. **Broad-tailed**, **Black-chinned**, **Rufous** and **Calliope** can all be found at feeders in the foothills and the nearby flatlands.

You will also notice that by early August the **Bullock's Orioles** will be mostly gone. They leave for the Southwest before departing for Central America for the winter. Also gone by the end of August are the **Black-headed Grosbeaks** and almost all the hummingbirds.

Clay-colored, **Brewer's** and **Chipping sparrows** are passing through in large numbers by mid to late August. Watch out for those juvenile "chippies" as they can be confusing, but young Clay-colored Sparrows are easier to ID in their immature plumage.

August offers the best opportunity to find **White-tailed Ptarmigan** because the young tend to be much more obvious. The Trail Ridge Road Visitors Center at Rocky Mountain National Park and Guanella Pass can be good areas to try for these hard-to-find birds. **Dusky Grouse** are also most easily found at this time of year for the same reason. Mount Falcon Open Space in Jefferson County can be a good place to try for them.

Birds can be anywhere: Tammy Sanders saw a **Spotted Sandpiper** on our street on the foothills of Golden – and I saw a **Wilson's Snipe** just uphill from our house earlier this year.

Good birding!



Lazuli Bunting
Credit: Jim Esten



DFO Board seeks professional facilitator for board retreat

By Susan Blansett

The DFO Board of Directors is seeking a professional facilitator for the board retreat on Oct. 5, 2019. The goal of the retreat is to outline a long-term vision for DFO and create a work plan for the coming two years. A qualified facilitator will help the board get the most out of the event.

Interested respondents are invited to provide the following information via email to Susan Blansett, susanblansett@gmail.com, no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 19.

- A summary of your qualifications and experience as a facilitator, and three references
- A description of the approach and processes you use, and options you offer for retreat style, exercises or methods
- Deliverables you typically provide to clients, e.g. an action report or strategic plan
- Fees and expenses for the preparatory work, the retreat and follow-up.
- Examples of similar groups you may have worked with
- Any other information you believe to be relevant and helpful

The task force planning the retreat will select candidates to interview before choosing a facilitator in late July or early August.

July Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks and/or lunch, insect repellent and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. August field trips will appear on the website on July 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Thursday, July 4

5:00 AM - 10:30 AM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there. An early morning holiday outing to see some of the variety of breeding birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch and nearby areas. This trip will visit areas where Ovenbirds are likely. Plan for up to 2 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single-track trails possible.

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Friday, July 5

6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there. Visit private Ken Caryl Ranch and adjacent parklands on this evening visit to explore the hogback areas and watch and listen as evening

settles over the area. We'll pay attention to the dusk chorus and after sunset we will focus on hearing and maybe seeing Common Poorwill. We will walk a mile or two on mostly gentle slopes.

Heron Pond Natural Area/ Heller Open Space

(Denver County)

Saturday, July 6

6:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955 cell

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Parking lot/cul-de-sac at Heron Pond.

This diamond in the rough is an unexpected refuge for waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds and more. It sits in the shadow of recycling yards and other urban industry where Denver's Globeville and Elyria Swansea neighborhoods meet northeast of the I-70 / I-25 "mousetrap." Trip route goes around pond and its marshlands, through fields in neighboring Heller Open Space, then south to Carpio Sanguinette Park and South Platte River. NOTE: No restrooms at this location.

Bluff Lake Nature Center

Sunday, July 7

7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Colleen Nunn

Email: cnunn6789@gmail.com

Phone: 303-520-7496

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From I-70 East, go south on Havana Street and left onto E 29th Dr, which then joins Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Continue on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd to Bluff Lake Nature Center in the park on left side.

Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat: wetland, yucca, and large

cottonwoods. This attracts a variety of raptors and songbirds. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. Paths are easy walking trails. We'll be walking 1-1.5 miles. Bring a scope if you have one.

Peak to Peak Highway

Monday, July 8

5:30 AM - 3:30 PM

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456 cell

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Rite Aid Pharmacy at 3348 28th St, Boulder, CO/Diagonal Plaza (the southeast corner of 28th and Iris Ave.) for a trip to Peak to Peak Highway

We will bird at a number of locations along the Peak to Peak Scenic Highway from Ward to Estes Park in search of mountain species. A visit to the Brainard Lake Recreation Area (entry fee or pass required) may be included. We will be carpool from the meeting location so be prepared to drive with a full tank of gas or share in mileage costs. Plan for a few miles of walking, with some uphill and rocky trails. Bring a scope, if you have one.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Monday, July 8

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mamershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From Denver take Highway 93 on the west side of Golden. Just north of Golden, at a traffic light, go West on State Highway 46 (Golden Gate Canyon Rd). Immediately, turn left into the parking lot on south side of the road.

We will make short hikes, but they may be steep in places. Birding after

July Field Trips cont.

lunch optional, depending on the weather.

Rainbow Gulch Trail Wednesday, July 10 5:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Diane Roberts
Email: Samatha576@aol.com
Phone: 720-278-9025
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11
Directions: Lowe's Home Improvements, 1360 New Beale Street, Castle Rock, CO 80108

Aspens, wildflowers and streams await on this 3-mile round trip walk at Rainbow Gulch Trail in Woodland Park, CO. The trail is maintained and level with less than 300 feet of elevation change. The top of the walk is Rampart Reservoir. Mountain birds await this trip.

Staunton State Park (Jefferson County) Saturday, July 13

6:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Chris Gilbert
Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com
Phone: 804-214-1508
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Take U.S. Highway 285 south to Shaffers Crossing, about 6 miles west of Conifer. Turn north on Elk Creek Road and follow the signs 1.5 miles to the park entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will hike 5 to 8 miles in total with potential for short, steep inclines on several of the park's trails. Habitat can include ponderosa pine, aspen, mountain riparian, meadows, and cliffs. Species may include a variety of woodpeckers, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, kinglets, nuthatches, and raptors as well as migrants. Our focus will be on observing bird behavior, analyzing field marks, and sounds. All levels of birders welcome.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, July 14

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek State Park. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

Park County Explorations Monday, July 15 - Tuesday, July 16 4:30 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at King Soopers in Aspen Park off Highway 285 at 25637 Conifer Road. Meet at the south side of the parking lot overlooking Hwy 285.

This trip will focus on high elevation areas of Park County seeking some special birds, camping overnight. Details will be announced before the trip, but expect to visit areas such as Kite Lake, the Four Mile Creek Limber Pine grove, Weston Pass, Salt Creek and other areas. Highlights may include White-tailed Ptarmigan, Northern Goshawk, Pine Grosbeak, Gray Jay, as well a wide variety of nesting birds, and amazing scenery and wildflowers. Overnight at a forest service campground (fee). We will need to carpool as best we can in SUVs or other high clearance vehicles. If significant afternoon or nighttime storms are expected

on Day 1 we may opt to cancel the overnight and Day 2.

Banner Lakes SWA (Weld County) Tuesday, July 16 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mark Amershek
Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the wildlife area for a half-day trip. Take I-76 east; at the Hudson exit (exit 31), go four miles east on CO 52. The main parking lot is on the left (north) just past CR 53 (Delorme 31 D6).

There are numerous small to medium-sized ponds, many ringed with marshes, Russian olives, and junipers. There is moderate on- and off-trail hiking of about 2-3 miles. Scopes would be helpful but not necessary. Potential for a hawk/owl search of the DIA loop in the afternoon.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Friday, July 19 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

Visit private Ken Caryl Ranch and adjacent parklands on this evening visit to explore the hogback areas and watch and listen as evening settles over the area. First, we'll visit hummingbird feeders with Calliope likely along with maybe 3 others. We'll pay attention to the dusk chorus and after sunset we will focus on hearing and maybe seeing Common Poorwill. We may walk a mile or two on mostly gentle slopes.

July Field Trips cont.

South Platte Park--South End

Saturday, July 20

6:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Amber Carver

Email: caramb22@gmail.com

Phone: 310-483-5721

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From West bound C-470, exit at Platte Canyon Road and drive north 0.1 mile to the 4-way stop at Chatfield Ave./Platte Canyon Rd. Turn right and drive 0.4 miles to Depew St. Turn right making a big U-turn to the right. Drive 0.3 miles south past Car Toys Marine and past the sign, "South Platte Reservoir and Park." The road curves to the left (east). Continue an additional 0.7 miles to the parking lot on the right.

After exploring South Platte Reservoir, we will walk along the lakes and river of South Platte Park looking for water fowl. The walk is 3 miles with some rough walking over the spillway. Bring a scope if you have one.

Main Reservoir (Lakewood)

Sunday, July 21

7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the parking lot which is on the south side of the lake. The lot is located 1/2 block west of S Kipling Pkwy on W Florida Ave., just west of the Starbucks parking lot.

This Lakewood City Park has about a 2-mile loop trail that goes around the lake. The west side is wooded and nice for passerines in migration. The lake has some water fowl and a pair of Spotted Sandpipers. There was a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron here in 2017 and interesting warblers in the spring.

Reynolds Park and Pine Valley Ranch (Jefferson County)

Monday, July 22

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: marnershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From Hwy 73 in Conifer, CO, travel south on US-285 S for 0.3 miles, slightly right onto Kennedy Gulch Rd for 0.1 mi. Take the first left toward S Foxton Rd. Turn left onto S Foxton Rd (Hwy 97) for 5.6 mi to Reynolds Park at 14070 S Foxton Rd, Conifer, CO 80433.

We'll bird the morning at Reynolds Open Space and then we will drive to Pine Valley Ranch for lunch and more birding in the afternoon. Certain parts of the trails are narrow and steep and can be difficult walking, especially at Reynolds. Total walking is about 5 miles for both locations.

Audubon Nature Center

Saturday, July 27

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Alison Kondler

Email: birdtrills@gmail.com

Phone: 303-904-9140

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Audubon Nature Center parking lot. From C-470 drive south on Wadsworth Blvd 4.2 mi. Turn left onto Waterton Rd. Drive 0.1 mi and turn left into the Audubon Center.

We will be identifying up to four species of hummingbirds by their sounds.

Staunton State Park (Jefferson County)

Sunday, July 28

6:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Take U.S. Highway 285 south to Shaffers Crossing, about 6 miles west of Conifer. Turn north on Elk Creek Road and follow the signs 1.5 miles to the park entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will hike 5 to 8 miles on several of the park's trails with potential for short, steep inclines. Habitat can include ponderosa pine, aspen, mountain riparian, meadows, and cliffs. Species may include a variety of woodpeckers, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, kinglets, nuthatches, and raptors as well as migrants. Our focus will be on observing bird behavior, analyzing field marks, and sounds. All levels of birders welcome. Lunch is optional.

Louviers (town) and DuPont Open Space (Douglas County)

Sunday, July 28

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodriscoll@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at DuPont Park in Louviers, CO. Take Santa Fe Drive (US 85) south to C-470 -exit. Continue south 6.5 miles on Santa Fe / US 85 to Louviers exit Turn right onto West Louviers Avenue, which becomes Main. Continue 1.5 miles on Main into town. Stay left past grassy triangle. Where road ahead begins to climb right, turn left at DuPont Park sign and drive along wooden fence to parking lot.

Founded in 1908 as company town for a DuPont dynamite factory, Louviers ("Loo-VEERS") today is a leafy haven of quiet streets and numerous songbirds, woodpeckers, flycatchers, and other species, both migrants and summer residents. Wood Ducks also breed in woods around off-limits pond refuge. We'll walk the village streets and the open space. Long pants are recommended for grassy open space woods.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Vice President	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2022)	behnfield@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2022)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com
Bea Weaver (2022)	beamiami@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Bea Weaver	beamiami@aol.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
-----------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

August 26

Kelly Uhing and
Vicki Vargas-Madrid
*Wild in the City: Birds
and Habitat in Denver Parks*

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----|-------|
| ☐ | Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ | Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 60 |
| ☐ | Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ | Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/SEPTEMBER 2019/VOL 55 NO 9

DFOBIRDS.ORG



Top: Kelly Uhing
Bottom: Vicki Vargas-Madrid

Monthly Program

Monday, August 26

Wild in the City: birds and habitats in Denver Parks

Kelly Uhing and Vicki Vargas-Madrid

DFO monthly programs are held at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd, Denver.

Programs begin at 7 PM.

DFO monthly programs are free and open to the public.

Kelly Uhing, Denver's city naturalist, and Vicki Vargas-Madrid, Wildlife Program administrator, will present *Wild in the City: birds and habitats in Denver Parks* when DFO resumes monthly programs in August. Both are members of Denver Parks and Recreation's (DPR) Natural Resources Operations Team. Their primary responsibilities are vegetation management, including noxious weed control and restoration of native species, and wildlife monitoring and management throughout Denver Parks and Denver Mountain Parks.

Their presentation will focus on current projects of the Natural Resources Operation Team and ongoing efforts to improve and protect wildlife habitat within the DPR system.

As the city naturalist, Uhing oversees management of natural resources, including vegetation and wildlife, within Denver's Natural Areas, Open Space, and Denver Mountain Parks. Before joining the city, she was state weed coordinator for the Colorado Department of Agriculture and focused on noxious weed management and policies statewide. She has been involved in noxious weed management projects and habitat restoration for 23 years.

Vargas-Madrid oversees management of urban wildlife and habitat within the natural resources section of DPR. In her previous job, Vargas-Madrid was a district wildlife manager for Colorado Parks and Wildlife for 18 years. She has 33 years of wildlife management experience.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dave Hill, president

Denver Field Ornithologists plunged into summer with the annual picnic and an initial series of Better Birding Workshops. I want to take a moment to celebrate these successful events and recognize the volunteers who made them possible. And, I will give you a sneak preview into what to expect this fall.

There were 65 revelers at the annual picnic at Prospect Park in Wheat Ridge. Contributions to the Grants Fund totaling \$500 were received by DFO Treasurer Sue Summers. Karen Drozda and John Breitsch led pre-picnic field trips. Huge thank-yous go to Tom Behnfield, Will Burt and their cadre of volunteers for planning and carrying out this successful event.

I also want to give another shout-out to Karen Drozda, chair of the Knowledge and Learning Committee, and committee members Mary Fran O'Connor, Mary Geder, Cynthia Madsen and Chuck Hundertmark for putting together DFO's first round of Better Birding Workshops. Now that they have worked through the logistics of planning and implementing, we can expect more top-notch workshops in the coming year.

Looking ahead to the last quarter of 2019, DFO will award funds to support conservation, education and research projects. We can also expect to see some changes to *The Lark Bunting*. Monthly programs resume in August and, of course, field trips will continue to be at the core of DFO activity.

The Grants Committee, led by Chris Goulart, will reveal grant recipients this month. Committee members Elaine Wagner, Tina Jones and Mary Fran O'Connor have been reviewing proposals and will make recommendations to the DFO Board at its Aug. 18 meeting. Look for an announcement in the October issue of *The Lark Bunting* and on the [DFO website](#).

After a successful launch of DFO's updated website in July, the Communications and Outreach Committee, led by Sharon Tinianow, ably supported by volunteers Jim

Esten and Patrick O'Driscoll, is turning its attention to *The Lark Bunting*. The committee will be coordinating the appearance of the newsletter with DFO's webpage, and finding ways to more effectively promote DFO events and ensure that members get the most up-to-date information and news.

Field trips are DFO's lifeblood, and Field Trip Chair Karen von Saltza and Field Trip Coordinator Gregg Goodrich are making sure our trips are planned and posted. They are assisted by schedulers Mary Cay Burger, Diane Roberts, Wendy Wibbens, Jill Boice and Mary Geder. What a fabulous resource they are! Of course, without the volunteer efforts of our certified field trip leaders, none of this would be possible. Many thanks to all of you!

Monthly programs resume on Aug. 26, thanks to the efforts of Program Chair Bill Turner. He continues to recruit interesting and relevant speakers. Tim Johnson faithfully reviews the programs for *The Lark Bunting* and, whenever possible, Jim Esten videotapes them so that, even if you cannot attend, you can enjoy these excellent programs.

Several other people behind the scenes deserve recognition. Kris Haglund, DFO's historian, manages and keeps our club records (which date from 1935) safe and accessible. You can check them out on the website. DFO Board Secretary Debbie James keeps accurate minutes of our board meetings. And none of this would be possible without the work of Membership Chair Mary Cay Burger to keep our organization viable.

The DFO Board ends the summer with a day-long board retreat on Oct. 5 to discuss the future of our organization. Vice-President Susan Blansett leads the planning effort for this important meeting, with the help of Bill Turner, Bea Weaver, Sharon Tinianow, Karen von Saltza, Debbie James and myself. Our goal is to make DFO a stronger and better vehicle for our birding adventures.

The next time you meet any of these individuals, please share your appreciation for what they do for DFO. And, if you are interested in volunteering yourself, please contact me via [the website](#).



Welcome to New DFO Members

Judi Acre, Arvada; Karen Aylmer, Highlands Ranch; Susan Bookman, Centennial; Heather Davis, Centennial; Andrew Dolan, Denver; Lisa Eggleston, Arvada; Ann S Epps, Denver; Lorraine and John Niemela, Golden; Tim Patnode, Denver; Kenneth Stuckey, Highlands Ranch; Thaddeus Wells, Denver; Lisa Carp and Emil Yappert, Superior; Julie Zahniser, Boulder; Gisellys Zarzuela, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Debbie and Tom Behnfield, Pat Heller, Peter Stoltz, Lisa Carp and Emil Yappert



Top: Broad-Tailed Hummingbird female (Jim Esten)

Bottom: Coopers Hawk fledgling (Jim Esten)

September: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding. In this issue we include both July and August guides.

By Ira Sanders

In September 2009, the average high in Denver was 77 degrees. Ten years later, at least one weather website states that the average high in Denver in September is now 82 degrees. In 2009 the average low was 48 degrees. In 2019 it is reported to be 50 degrees. Temperatures have reached as high as 97 degrees and have fallen as low as 17 degrees.

September weather is very changeable, as illustrated by the September 17, 1971 storm that dumped more than two feet of snow on the Front Range foothills. I remember it well, having just arrived at Colorado State University in Fort Collins as a sophomore; all the kids from California who had never seen snow were going crazy making snow angels. The temperature had dropped nearly 60 degrees in 48 hours. In contrast, the town of Eads reported 107 degrees in September 1947.

Populus tremuloides, better known as Quaking Aspen, will be in peak colors in the high country by the fourth weekend of the month and elk will already have begun their reveille in September. Elk bugling reaches its peak about the same time the aspen's color does in late September and early October.

Fall migration really starts to pick up with Labor Day weekend. This seems to be the best time to look for **Canada Warbler** in places like Prewitt Reservoir State Wildlife Area and Barr Lake State Park. Earlier this decade, this species was seen three years in a row at Barr Lake near the banding station around Labor Day.

You should also look low for **Mourning** and **Connecticut Warblers** later in the month in wetter areas. The number of migrating sparrows, warblers and other songbirds also increases September. Raptor migration starts to pick up late in the month. Large numbers of birds sometimes pass through on the heels of arctic fronts. Check for migrants the morning after one of these cold fronts moves through.

The Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Crow Valley Campground in Weld County, Valco Ponds in Pueblo, Bel Mar Park in Lakewood and Barr Lake State Park can be good migrant traps in fall migration. The banding stations at Barr Lake and Chico Basin usually turn up a few good birds. If you can find the right habitat, September can still be a good month for shorebirds. The habitat part could be hard this year because water levels on the plains are high. Check Prewitt SWA and Lake Jackson State Park if the water is low enough for mudflats – but don't forget about the other shorebird habitats I mentioned in the August column, including Lower Latham Reservoir, Loloff Reservoir and Beebe Draw.

Terns start coming through in numbers so remember to watch for **Arctic Tern** mixed in among the **Forster's** and **Common Terns**. In early October 2000, there were Arctic Terns at Chatfield Reservoir.

Happy birding!

DFO birders hone eBird skills in June workshop

By Chuck Hundertmark

Eighteen DFO birders congregated at the Barr Lake State Park Visitor Center on June 29 for a half-day workshop with Gregg Goodrich to fine tune their skills using eBird. Participants ranged from eBird newcomers to experienced users who wanted to delve deeper into the great things you can do with eBird.

Gregg took the participants through features of the web site while seated indoors. Then, the group moved outside to the visitor center deck to use the [eBird Mobile app](#) to enter observations.

The class covered ways to use eBird to find species, explore birding locations and set alerts for birds you want to see. Gregg walked participants through steps for entering data using a computer or the mobile app on a smartphone. He also demonstrated how to use the [Merlin Bird ID app](#) in conjunction with eBird.

The workshop was DFO's third this year, with two more scheduled for August. Check the [Programs and Events section of the DFO website](#) for information on future workshops.



Gregg Goodrich leading eBird workshop.

September Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks and/or lunch, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. October field trips will appear on the website on September 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

First Creek at RM Arsenal

Sunday, September 1

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Take I-70 east to Pena Blvd. Drive north to 56th Ave Exit. Turn left at the light, pass under the highway and turn right into the First Creek parking lot.

Early autumn migration should bring stopover birds. Hawks and other year-round residents should be abundant and flycatchers should still be about. Expect to walk 4 miles or so of level ground. No restrooms at this location, so "go before you go" at the King Soopers off Tower Road

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Monday, September 2

6:30 AM - 10:30 AM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park on South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

A short holiday exploration of the Ken Caryl Ranch area and maybe

Deer Creek to see what migrants we can find in the hogback and foothill habitats. Plan for up to 2 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single-track trails.

Southeastern Colorado

Tuesday, September 3

4:30 AM - 8:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Denver area meeting location to be announced the week before the trip.

We begin near sunrise in Cheyenne County and explore back roads seeking migrants and county birds in this under-birded and challenging county. Then we move to Kiowa County to focus on shorebirds and other waterbirds in the Queens Reservoirs SWA. Other stops to be determined.

Ouzel Falls, Rocky Mt. Natl. Park

Wednesday, September 4

6:00 AM - 3:00 PM

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456 cell

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the Spruce Pool, 2102 Spruce St., Boulder.

We will bird the Wild Basin Area of RMNP, hiking along N. St. Vrain Creek to Ouzel Falls and back, a round trip hike of about 5 1/2 miles with an elevation gain of approximately 900 feet. An annual or day Park Pass is required.

Green Mountain Falls-town and lower elevation trails

Saturday, September 7

6:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock; 1360 New Beale St, Castle Rock, CO 80108

We will carpool to Green Mountain Falls –about a one hour drive – and hike for 4 miles with some elevation gain. Typical mountain birds like Steller's Jay and Evening Grosbeak are expected. Scopes are welcome but not necessary.

Spruce Mountain Open Space

Sunday, September 8

6:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Safeway, 9229 Lincoln Avenue, Exit 193, Lone Tree. Ponderosa pine and scrub oak dominate the hillsides of this Douglas county open space just north of Palmer Lake. Warbling and Plumbeous Vireo, Western Tanager, Western Bluebird, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Lesser Goldfinch all breed in this area. We will walk 3-4 miles of mountain and prairie trails.

Western Colorado

Monday, September 9 -

Tuesday, September 10

5:00 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: The leader will notify participants of the exact meeting places and times planned for each day.

A western exploration at a great time for migrant landbirds and waterbirds.

Day 1: Garfield County, maybe with a stop in Eagle on the way. Overnight camping probably at Rifle Mountain Park with a hotel option in nearby Rifle.

Day 2: waterbird and migrant spots in Mesa and Delta Counties. Plan for possible hot weather and long drives.

Fall Count: Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)

Friday, September 13

6:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Cynthia Madsen

Email: cmadsen08@gmail.com

Phone: 303-770-6534

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet in the Marina parking lot. Enter through the west entrance off Dayton St.

We will bird areas within park as designated by leader. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and bug repellent. Scopes are useful. State Parks pass required.

Fall Count: Audubon Nature Center

Saturday, September 14

6:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Audubon Nature Center parking lot. From C-470 drive south on Wadsworth Blvd 4.2 mi. Turn left onto Waterton Rd. Drive 0.1 mi and turn left into the Audubon Center.

We will bird downstream trails for 4-5 miles. Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles, and knapweed. After lunch we'll drive south past Roxborough State Park road to look for prairie birds.

Fall Count: Chatfield State Park

Saturday, September 14

6:30 AM - 7:00 PM

Joey Kellner

Email: vireo1@comcast.net

Phone: 303-978-1748

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Directions: Meet at swim beach by entering west entrance of park off S Wadsworth, 1.5 miles south of C-470. We'll cover many habitats within the park as designated by leader. Be prepared to walk a lot and bring a lunch. State Parks pass required.

Fall Count: Barr Lake State Park

Saturday, September 14

6:30 AM - 2:00 PM

David Hill

Email: d_d_hill@comcast.net

Phone: 303-870-4316

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. Exit I-76 at Bromley Lane. Drive east 0.25 mile. Turn right (south) onto Lark Bunting Lane. Continue 1.1 mi to parking lot at end of road.

We will bird areas within park as designated by leader. Bring lunch. State Parks pass required.

Fall Count: Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

Sunday, September 15

6:15 AM - 5:00 PM

David Hill

Email: d_d_hill@comcast.net

Phone: 303-870-4316

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitor Center. From the intersection of Quebec Pkwy and 64th Ave, drive east on Prairie Pkwy 0.6 mi. Turn left onto Gateway Rd and continue 1.1 mi to the visitor center parking lot. We will bird areas within the NWR as designated by leader. Bring lunch.

Fall Count: Barr Lake Periphery

Sunday, September 15

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet on the entrance road to Barr Lake State Park. Exit

I-76 at Bromley Lane. Drive east 0.8 mile. Turn right onto Picadilly Rd and continue 1.9 mi. Turn right onto entrance road and continue 0.2 mi to pull-off BEFORE entrance station. We will drive country roads around Barr Lake with several stops along the way, looking for raptors, sparrows and other prairie birds. This trip is especially suited for persons with limited mobility.

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Wednesday, September 18

6:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Tim Ryan & Diane Roberts

Email: Tryan4thebirds@yahoo.com

Phone: 720-545-5084

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO. We will begin birding at Bar CCC. A bus will take us to Rueter- Hess Reservoir. This is a restricted access area so we need to stay until the trip is completed. Feel free to bring a spotting scope.

Hidden Mesa Open Space - Douglas County (Pleasant View Dr. Trailhead)

Sunday, September 22

6:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Lowe's Castle Rock, between the outlet malls and Santa Fe Drive. Founders exit off of I-25 S.

There is a good chance for a variety of birds including raptors, sparrows, vireos, and swallows. Total distance will be 4 to 5 miles with some up and down and a few switchbacks.

Boulder County

Monday, September 23

6:30 AM - 1:00 PM

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456 cell)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8



Western Meadowlark
Credit: Jim Esten

Directions: Meet at the Spruce Pool, 2102 Spruce St., Boulder.

We will visit a few locations in Boulder and, possibly, Lyons targeting fall migrants. Plan for a few miles of walking on level trails.

South-Central Colorado

Tuesday, September 24

5:00 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet in the Lowe's parking lot in Castle Rock at 1360 New Beale Street

This trip will focus on sampling birds and exploring areas of beautiful Custer and Huerfano Counties, with a good variety of species likely and a chance for something unexpected.

Writer's Vista Park to McClellan Reservoir

Saturday, September 28

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Doris Cruze

Email: cruzeduo@aol.com

Phone: 303-798-8072

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Writer's Vista Park in Littleton; intersection of W. Mineral and the Highline Canal.

Enjoy an easy hike along the canal trail. We'll look for songbirds and other wildlife on the trail and for waterfowl at the reservoir. Bring a scope if you have one, and a sack lunch if you want to lunch at the park.

Kettle Lakes

Sunday, September 29

6:15 AM - 1:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Lowe's Castle Rock, between the outlet malls and Santa Fe Drive.

Hike 4 to 5 miles around the lakes looking for water birds as well as migrants. Most of the trail is flat but some sure-footedness is required for other parts.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Vice President	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2022)	behnfield@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2022)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com
Bea Weaver (2022)	beamiami@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Bea Weaver	beamiami@aol.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdln@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
-----------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

September 23
TBD

October 28
TBD

November 25
TBD

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 60
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:
Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/OCTOBER 2019/VOL 55 NO 10

DFOBIRDS.ORG

Monthly Program

Monday, September 23

There's No Sex Like Insects

Mike Weissmann, PhD

DFO monthly programs are held at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd, Denver. Programs begin at 7 PM.

Colorado entomologist Mike Weissmann will take our DFO audience on an entertaining look at the wild, wondrous, and even wacky world of "bug sex" at the September DFO monthly program. It's a peek into the fascinating and often bizarre mating and reproductive practices of insects and their relatives.

Come learn that plants with yellow flowers are the "singles' bar" for soldier beetles . . . and that insects attract mates with everything from flashing lights (lightning bugs), colors and patterns (butterflies), pheromones, sounds and claws. Mike will explore and explain the varied methods of insect mating and reproduction, he will also bring some special guests – live arthropods.

Weissmann is chief entomologist for [Vector Disease Control International](#). His current research focuses on Colorado mosquitoes and the West Nile Virus they can carry. He also presents insect-related educational programs to audiences of all ages, including the award-winning "Dr. Mike's Bag of Bugs."

He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in biology at the University of Colorado Boulder and his doctorate in entomology from Colorado State University, where he continues to serve as an affiliate faculty member. He also is an adjunct curator at the [University of Colorado Museum of Natural History](#) and a department associate in the entomology collection at the [Denver Museum of Nature and Science](#). Weissmann has published a variety of technical articles about insect taxonomy, biology, and behavior and is co-author of popular guides to insects in regional parks and monuments.



Loggerhead Shrike
Credit: Chuck Hundertmark

August Program Review

By Tim Johnson

On Monday Aug. 26, DFO's new monthly program year began with "Wild in the City: birds and habitats in Denver Parks," presented by Kelly Uhing and Vicki Vargas-Madrid of Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR). Their informative presentation included an overview of DPR work and activities in habitat restoration and details about some of their current projects. (Much of their information can be found in the Trees and [Natural Resources section](#) of Parks and Recreation's pages on the denvergov.org website.)

Uhing, Denver's city naturalist and a longtime specialist in management of noxious weeds, described the city's approach to weed control in Denver's five Designated Natural Areas as well as in the city's mountain parks and open-space areas. The city follows "reconciliation ecology," which is devoted to sustaining and improving biodiversity in human-dominated environments. The city seeks to restore native vegetation using integrated weed management protocols – herbicides, biological control agents, mechanical weed removal, and reintroduction of native plants.

Uhing said weed targets fall into three categories, labeled Lists A, B and C. Species not known or with few known populations in Colorado (list A), such as Purple Loosestrife, are eradicated whenever discovered. Established non-natives in varying density (list B), such as Myrtle Spurge and Cheatgrass, are treated depending on their location. Control of species common in Colorado (list C), including Mullein, is a decision left up to local jurisdictions.

Current Denver projects include native-seed collection at Summit Lake and preparation for treatment of List B perennial weeds (Canada Thistle, Myrtle Spurge, Dalmatian Toadflax). Fall is a good time for toxic treatment and eradication of perennials because the plants spend the season making and storing nutrients for next spring's growing season. To enlist property owners' help in the effort, Denver holds an annual promotion in May to trade native plants for weeds. For each bag of pulled Myrtle Spurge (including roots) brought in, DPR trades a bag of native plants. Details are on the [DPR website](#).

Vargas-Madrid, who supervises Denver's management of wildlife and habitat in urban settings, followed Uhing with a description of her work as the city's wildlife manager – a job she said is mainly people management. She said DPR takes a hands-off approach to wildlife and sees its mission as mostly educational. She tries to raise awareness of and provide information about urban wildlife through neighborhood meetings, outdoor events, and other opportunities. Two highlights of her talk:

- Denver intends to gain certification as a [Community Wildlife Habitat](#) by the end of 2019. This program overseen by the National Wildlife Federation creates "habitat gardens" for wildlife throughout the city and county and involves much community education.
- Denver is an [Urban Bird Treaty City](#) and is beginning the [Lights Out Denver](#) program to encourage business and property owners to turn off building lights voluntarily from dusk to dawn during spring and fall migration. Starting in September, volunteers will help establish a reference database by collecting birds killed by window strikes around downtown Denver buildings. If results of the voluntary switch-off suggest a decrease in migrant bird mortality, the program would seek to adopt policies and laws to require such lights-out measures.

Much of the question-and-answer session after the presentation was devoted, predictably, to the recent culling of Canada Geese in several Denver parks. Overall, the discussion of the controversy was edgy but polite. Uhing and Vargas-Madrid both fielded questions directly and openly. One questioner was concerned about whether U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services – the federal animal damage-control program that carried out the capture and removal of park geese under contract for the city – would participate in any future culling. Vargas-Madrid and Uhing said that will depend on future circumstances. Another questioner was skeptical about the timing of the culling just weeks after official approval of Colorado Parks and Wildlife's [Canada goose management plan](#). Vargas-Madrid replied that the plan had been publicly available since 2017. Both speakers emphasized that only resident, non-migratory geese are subject to the city's management protocols.

Continued on page 3

Have a way with words? Join the C&O Committee

*By Sharon Tinianow, chair of the DFO
Communications & Outreach Committee*

What if Denver Field Ornithologists leaders did a great job of planning a field trip, a program, or a workshop and nobody knew about it? What a shame that would be! Communication is a key element in the planning process and DFO leaders have, over the past several years, done a great job of developing tools to make sure that members know about these great activities.

Our website, newsletter, direct emails, and Facebook page are all important outlets for information about DFO. Coordinating those efforts is the job of the Communications and Outreach Committee. In addition, the C&O committee is responsible for finding ways to spread the word about DFO to those who have not yet discovered our organization. The outreach part of our work is accomplished by identifying stories of interest to the general public and pitching those to the news media, as well as supporting DFO presence at special events.

All of this work is done by volunteers and we are looking for more volunteers to get involved so we can do an even better job of keeping DFO members informed.

- Do you enjoy writing short, interesting news items for posting on the website?
- Would you be willing to serve as a co-manager of the website, helping DFO volunteer leaders with issues as they arise?
- Are you a big fan of Instagram and interested in seeing DFO have an Instagram presence?
- Do you have another idea about how DFO can better communicate with members and reach out to the public?

If any of these ideas interest you, please get in touch and join our active committee. Contact committee chair Sharon Tinianow at sharontinianow@gmail.com.

PROGRAM REVIEW cont. from page 2

Another commenter suggested putting the goose cull in perspective, because the number of state-sanctioned bird kills in Colorado by [Wildlife Services](#) dwarfs the 1,600 geese culled in Denver. (According to the 2013 Environmental Assessment for Bird Damage Management, that federal agency killed an average of 66,093 European Starlings, 5,911 Rock Pigeons, 1,256 Red-Winged Blackbirds, and 559 Horned Larks a year in Colorado, between 2006 and 2010.) In discussing the goose culling, Vargas-Madrid noted that such control actions increased the environmental "carrying capacity" for other bird species. It would be rewarding to see supporting data for this hypothesis.

I got to thinking during and after the presentation that an issue not talked about was Denver's recent rapid development. The city's population has risen about 20 percent since 2010. Outside of the city's mountain parks system, Denver parks comprise only 5 percent of the land in the city/county limits. The need for more open space is obvious. There also seems to be plenty of available information about the effects of urbanization on biodiversity, at least for birds. These data and common sense suggest that aggressive pursuit of programs like Lights Out Denver, which directly benefit wildlife and have a sound scientific basis, should be encouraged.

This program was videotaped. Visit the [DFO website](#) to watch it. From the homepage, go to Past Programs and click on the link for the August program video.



Birds and Trees workshop with Dave Leatherman
Credit: Chuck Hundertmark

Program update: Better Birding Skills workshops

By Karen Drozda, Knowledge and Learning Committee Chair

If participation is any indication, our Better Birding Skills workshops have been a great success in 2019. We have had workshops on passerine identification with bird bander Meredith McBurney; using eBird in the field with DFO eBird Mobile maven Gregg Goodrich; shorebird biology, ecology and conservation with national shorebird coordinator Brad Andres; and bird food sources in trees with avian food expert Dave Leatherman.

Our next workshop, “Fundamentals of Gull Identification,” is set for November, exact date still to be determined. Watch for an email or check the [DFO website](#) for details (click on “Programs and Events” or check the calendar in “Upcoming Events,” both on the homepage).

Now that we have some experience behind us, we are making two changes to the program. First, we are working diligently with our web developer to streamline the registration and payment process. Beginning in January 2020, the only way to pay the workshop fee will be via [PayPal](#). This process will make it easier for our treasurer to post payments.

Second, Better Birding Skills Workshops are now open only to DFO members. If you are a member, this is a new benefit you receive for paying your annual dues. If you are not a member, this would be a great time to join. It is inexpensive, and if you join after Oct. 1, your dues will cover DFO membership all the way through 2020. You can join via the website by clicking on “Join or Renew Your Membership.”

The Knowledge and Learning Committee is actively brainstorming ideas for future workshops and quality presenters. We strive to present workshops on topics that will enhance your birding experience. The member survey in 2018 gave us with great information about what birding topics you’d like to learn more about. But you can also contact me via the [Programs page of the DFO website](#) if you have a good idea for a future workshop.

Watch for details on workshops in the coming months in future issues of *The Lark Bunting*. And, you can always visit the website to see what is new. Thanks to all of you for your enthusiastic participation in these workshops, and thanks to the K&L Committee for all its hard work.

Birds and Trees with David Leatherman

By Chuck Hundertmark

Colorado entomologist, birder and photographer David Leatherman, well known for his grasp of what hungry birds like to eat, was the instructor for “Birds and Trees,” the fifth installment of DFO’s Better Birding Workshop series. Workshop committee member Cynthia Madsen organized this two-part workshop, with a lecture session at Unity Spiritual Center Denver on Aug 24 and field trip to Fairmont Cemetery in Fort Collins – Leatherman’s home “patch” – a week later, on Aug. 31.

Leatherman’s knowledge of trees, insects and birds is well known to Colorado birders. His skills allow him to draw the connections between the three groups of organisms. During the classroom portion of the workshop, he discussed the relationships between birds and trees. Trees provide birds with two of the three necessities all animals need: food and cover. In some cases, they provide the third: water. The class also included a discussion of basic tree identification. Participants learned which trees dominate Colorado’s major habitat types, and the major foods that trees provide for birds – the insects that trees harbor, and parts of the trees themselves that birds eat.

Leatherman also described which trees are good to plant in this area to attract birds, and he discussed the management conflict that dead trees present between liability concerns and wildlife habitat.

On the field trip half of the workshop, Leatherman pointed out identifying features of various tree species in the cemetery. Participants were introduced to hackberry nipple galls and cottonwood galls, lumpy tree growths made by insects that birds seek as food.

Leatherman, a biology graduate of Marietta (OH) College, earned his master’s in forestry from Duke University before coming to Colorado as forest entomologist for the Colorado State Forest Service. Although he retired after 31 years in the position, Leatherman still contributes insect specimens every year to Colorado State University’s Gillette Museum, a few of them new to science. For the past three decades, his passion has been to investigate the food habits of Colorado birds. His research is chronicled in “The Hungry Bird,” his regular column in *Colorado Birds*, the journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. You can read his column on the [CFO website](#).

DFO forming new Conservation Committee

By Steve Ryder, Conservation Chair

As a teenager living in central Nebraska, I couldn’t wait to get my driver’s license. It wasn’t for the usual reason most of my friends had – cruising Main Street on weekend evenings. Rather, I aimed to navigate the snowy, muddy farm roads along the Platte River in early spring to observe the return of the Sandhill Cranes. Back in the early 1970s, it seemed like there was only me, some farmers, and a few Audubon members from Lincoln and Omaha doing the observing. Those were “our” cranes.

Alas, I had to leave the cranes when I moved to Denver, where I graduated from high school and ventured on to Colorado University and Colorado State University. After that, it was on to Utah State University in Logan, where I adopted the nearby Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge as a second home. After teaching environmental policy at three universities and working for land trusts in Colorado and Montana, I now direct the invasive plant program at the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Today, the cranes and many other bird species confront challenges that leave many of us wondering, “What can I do to help?” The DFO Board has answered this question by establishing a committee that will focus on bird conservation. I expressed an interest in helping to form the Conservation Committee and the next thing I knew, I was writing this, my first article for the newsletter!

Before getting along too far in developing the committee, we’d like to hear your thoughts via the membership survey. Please fill that out when it

Continued on page 6

arrives soon in your email inbox. Key to helping us form an outline for our bird conservation efforts is to develop ideas along these lines:

POSSIBLE COMMITTEE GOALS

- Help members become more aware of threats to birds (habitat, structures, vehicles, unnatural predation or harassment, to name a few)
- Help members become more aware of past, present and future conservation activities
- Provide more opportunities for members who want to get involved in conservation to do so

SCOPE

- In his *7 Habits* series, the late self-help author Stephen Covey spoke of our circle of concern vs. our circle of influence. Within our circle of concern is what we care about (this can be a really large circle!), while much smaller is our circle of influence, which comprises what we can do something about. This can apply to the issues DFO may choose to become involved with, and also to the geographical areas to which we may want to direct our focus, energy and effort.

There are many other building blocks to the Conservation Committee that need shaping, so if you think you'd be interested in helping us out, please let us know. Send us an email via the contact form at the very bottom of the [DFO website](#) homepage. Check "Other" and write "Conservation Committee" in the message field and we'll be back in touch. Thanks!

DFO awards 4 research grants for 2019

By Chris Goulart

In 2019, the Denver Field Ornithologists' Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund Committee received five applications for grant awards. Four of the five met the basic criteria for awards from DFO. The four project proposals and their corresponding grant awards were:

1. Black Swift Movement Ecology Project – Rob Sparks, research biologist/GIS manager, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

This application seeks monetary help in placing geolocators on Black Swifts for three project study objectives:

- Determining foraging range, duration and distance at breeding locations. The project now has two global positioning system (GPS) tags on birds, with foraging data new to science. Increasing the sample size, however, will be important to understanding and having stronger inference of the birds' movement patterns. Identifying foraging areas around swift breeding locations is critical to conserving this species.
- Determining a more precise wintering area for the species. The GPS devices will track exactly where Black Swifts go during winter months so we can focus conservation efforts at those locations.
- Determining whether Black Swifts perform "aerial roosting" on the wintering grounds, a behavior documented with Common Swifts.

Award: After careful consideration, the Grants Committee voted to award \$2,000 to the Black Swift Movement Ecology Project.

2. Exploring song dialects between and within populations of Black-capped and Mountain chickadees – Kathryn Grabenstein, University of Colorado Boulder

This project seeks funds to help pay for acoustical equipment to study song differences between and within populations of Black-capped Chickadees and Mountain Chickadees. It would survey these species along an elevational gradient to assess if chickadee song dialects exist across Colorado's Front Range.

Continued on page 7

Award: The committee voted to award \$500 to the Black-capped and Mountain Chickadee song dialect study.

3. Drivers of Flammulated Owl movement behaviors in southern Colorado – Scott Yanco, PhD candidate, Integrative and Systems Biology, University of Colorado Denver

Flammulated owls in Colorado are known to preferentially select older Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine trees with larger live crowns when choosing home ranges and foraging and roosting locations. Prey abundance is a potential driver of this apparent preference for older forests. To test this hypothesis (i.e., that optimal foraging theory and marginal value theorem explain owl movement patterns), the project will build a landscape model of prey availability (by both abundance and caloric value) for use in subsequent movement models with archival GPS location-relocation data. This study is in the Hot Creek Research Natural Area on the east slope of the San Juan Mountains in southern Colorado.

Award: The committee voted to award \$2,000 to the Flammulated Owl movement behaviors study.

4. How do non-breeding conditions affect Colorado's Barn Swallows? – Molly McDermott, M.S. Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado Boulder.

In 2018, McDermott deployed 72 geolocators to identify the migratory routes and non-breeding locations used by Barn swallows, a charismatic but declining aerial insectivore species in Colorado. With their return in spring 2019, she is using geolocator data to analyze how non-breeding food availability affected their breeding success in 2019.

Award: The committee voted to award \$2,000 to the Barn Swallow non-breeding conditions study.



Top: Western Tanager
Credit: Jim Esten

Bottom: Bushtit Female
Credit: Sangeeta Chakraborty

October: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

By Ira Sanders

The average temperatures in October have not changed since 2009, according to several weather websites. The average high in Denver is 66 degrees and the average low is 36, down 16 degrees on the high and 14 on the low from September, though it has reached 89 degrees and fallen to just 3 degrees in October. This month's temperature extremes are well-illustrated by the temperatures in Brown's Park on Oct. 20, 1995, when the overnight low was 5 degrees and the high reached 69. That one-day swing is a greater temperature change than some coastal cities see in an entire year. Gambel oak and other oak trees, found mostly in western and southern Colorado, reach their color peak in early October. On the Front Range, Castlewood Canyon State Park near Franktown is a good place to go. Aspen trees are losing their leaves as their color extravaganza comes to a close.

Sandhill Cranes begin their southward migration and can be seen and heard in numbers ranging from two to several hundred over the eastern plains. You will frequently hear them but not see them as their almost prehistoric call carries for miles and they often fly too high for us to see.

Waterfowl migration picks up from the usual low numbers in September, especially if cold weather holds off farther north. A good place to check near Pueblo is Lake Pueblo State Park. A **Jaeger** was already sighted there in early September, so it may be great this October for rarities as well as more than 20 species of dabbling and diving ducks and as many as four species of loon.

Barr Lake State Park southeast of Brighton will have many divers and a good representation of dabblers. Sawhill and Walden ponds in Boulder can be good, and Jumbo and Prewitt reservoirs in northeast Colorado can have thousands of geese of at least five species this time of year. The plains reservoirs in the southeast, especially John Martin Reservoir, can be very good. At Totten Reservoir near Cortez, Vallecito Reservoir near Durango, Highline Reservoir near Grand Junction and Fruitgrowers Reservoir near Delta, you can see 20 or more species of ducks as well as grebes and loons. Other good places to check are Big Johnson Reservoir in Colorado Springs, and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge near Alamosa.

Mountain reservoirs such as Spinney, Elevenmile and Antero (all near Fairplay, Hartzel and Lake George) have turned up all three species of **Scoter** in recent years, as well as rare gulls (including **Glaucous-winged Gull**) and four species of loons. But be smart and check the road conditions before you go; a huge hailstorm in early September caused a lot of damage to the roads in the area. Forest Service Offices in Park County may have that information.

Of special note is the possibility of "one-day wonder" murrelets. **Ancient** and **Long-billed murrelets** have been seen at several Front Range locations in the past. It appears that all previous sightings were between Oct. 15 and Dec. 5. Places as small as Bear Creek Lake Park in Jefferson County (Nov. 8, 2004) and as large as Chatfield Reservoir, Lake Pueblo and Blue Mesa Reservoir have had murrelets for a day. If you hear of a sighting, don't wait until tomorrow to try to see it. These "floating corks" are not likely to stick around.

Shorebirds are still coming through in October, though almost all will be juveniles as the adults have gone through already. October is best for **Black-bellied** and **American Golden plovers**. A rare **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was seen on Oct. 7, 2000 at John Martin Reservoir, so rarities are always possible. The variety of shorebirds is better earlier in the month.

Continued on page 9



Lazuli bunting
Credit: Sangeeta Chakraborty

WHAT BIRDS cont. from page 8

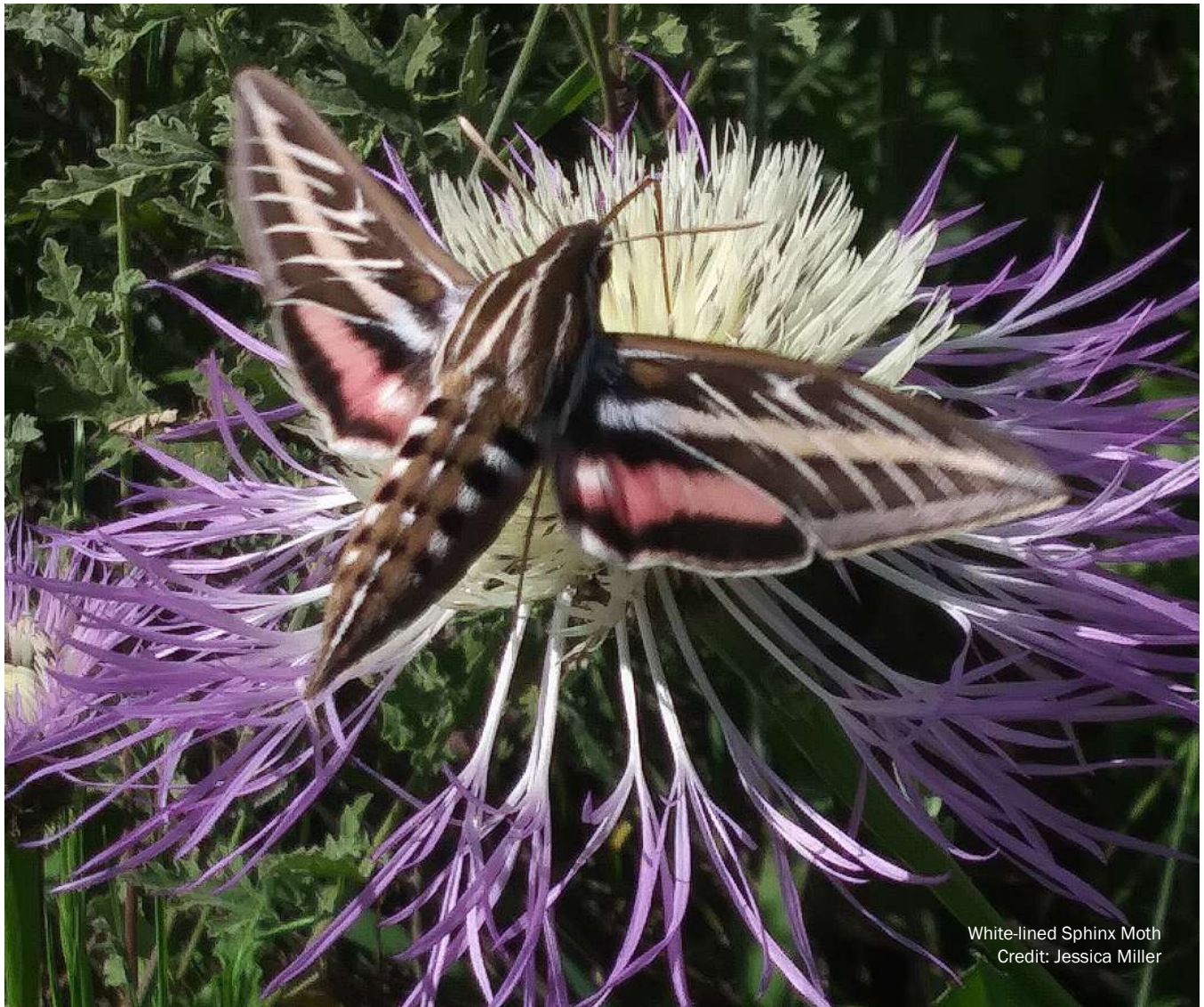
Late migrant warblers such as **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, **Palm Warbler** and **Pine Warbler**, along with numerous **Orange-crowned** and **Yellow-rumped** warblers, can be found almost anywhere there are trees and shrubs. **Ospreys** can be found at larger lakes along the foothills as they migrate south, but they are increasingly difficult to find as the month nears its end. **Rough-legged Hawks** will start to show up on the plains, as well as migrant **Short-eared Owls** and **Merlins**.

Sabine's Gulls (juvenile birds are much more likely, but adults are not uncommon) are moving through and along the Front Range. Chatfield Reservoir can be a good place. This is also the best time of year for jaegers. Watch the flocks of gulls for a falcon-like bird harassing them.

Late migrant hummingbirds pass through in October with the possibility of a "rare" or unusual species at your own feeder. **Dark-eyed Juncos**, **American Tree Sparrows** and **White-crowned Sparrows** begin to arrive as the last of the "warm weather" sparrows such as Chipping, Clay-colored, Vesper and Lincoln's leave. Look among flocks of White-crowneds for the occasional **Harris's Sparrow** or **White-throated Sparrow**, or maybe even a **Golden-crowned Sparrow**.

Look VERY carefully at ALL Western-type kingbirds after mid-September as they are likely to be **Cassin's Kingbirds**, or even a rarer kingbird: Colorado has two **Thick-billed Kingbird** records and of what looks like three **Tropical Kingbird** records. Jefferson County got its first Tropical just one year ago.

Happy birding!



White-lined Sphinx Moth
Credit: Jessica Miller



Sandhill Cranes
Credit: Jim Esten

October Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks and/or lunch, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. November field trips will appear on the website on October 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Jackson Lake Reservoir

Saturday, October 5

7:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Paul Slingsby

Email: paslingsby@comcast.net

Phone: 720-347-5169 mobile

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway. We will carpool from there. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is an all-day trip so bring lunch. Scopes will be helpful and remember your mud boots as we may hike through some mud.

Chatfield State Park

S. Platte Delta

Sunday, October 6

7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Directions: Meet at Kingfisher parking lot which is north of the road and just west of the South Platte River. From Kingfisher parking lot walk north to the South Platte River delta.

Good shorebird habitat. We will also explore the Plum Creek Delta which is much more strenuous.

Joder Ranch

Saturday, October 12

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Chuck Hundertmark

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Interim Border Trailhead on the west side of US36 about 3.2 miles north of the Broadway intersection.

This is a moderate to difficult half-day hike of 2 miles each direction (4 miles total). Expect a variety of foothills birds.

Longmont Area Birding

Sunday, October 13

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Christie Owens

Email: christieowens2@icloud.com

Phone: 970-481-7271

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Jim Hamm Natural Area parking lot. From I-25 take exit 240. Go west 4 miles on CO 119 (Ken Pratt Blvd) to Boulder-Weld County Line Road, then ~2 miles north to park on left at E 17th Ave at Jim Hamm P.

We will spend the morning looking for waterfowl and possibly doing some land birding in areas around Longmont. If you have a scope please bring it. We will spend most if not all of our time driving from place to place. We may take a short walk of a mile or less.

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Monday, October 14

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch and, maybe, nearby Deer Creek. Plan for up to 3 miles of walking on mostly easy terrain.

Lake County

Tuesday, October 15

5:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Stegasaurus parking area off I-70 just west of I-470. Take exit 279 off I-70 and the Stegosaurus parking lot is on the SE corner of the intersection.

We will explore several locations to sample varied habitats and seek out especially any interesting waterbirds that might be around in this challenging, little-birded and gorgeous mountain county. Bring a scope if you have one.

Cherry Creek State Park

(Arapahoe County)

Saturday, October 19

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger

Email: mcburger3@juno.com

Phone: 720-940-8394

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Enter the east side of Cherry Creek State Park via Lehigh off of Parker Road. Go just past the entrance station and turn left (south) at the first intersection. Go about 1/4 mile to the parking for Pelican Point. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Scopes are useful.

**Brush Hollow, Aiken and Rock Creek Canyon
Sunday, October 20**

6:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Rebecca Laroche

Email: RebeccaLLaroche@gmail.com

Phone: 626-318-4435

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet in the Lowe's parking lot off of Founder's Parkway in Castle Rock. We will carpool from there. State Park pass or day use permit required.

All our destinations will be off of Hwy 115, south of the city of Colorado Springs, including Cheyenne Mountain State Park, Brush Hollow Reservoir, Aiken Preserve, and Rock Creek Canyon. Various thrashers, Juniper Titmouse, Scaled Quail, buntings, bluebirds, and tanagers and others are expected. Because of the duration, trip is listed as moderate; each trail itself is probably on the easy side.

**Dawson Butte Ranch Open Space
(Douglas County)**

Sunday, October 20

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at Castle Rock's north McDonald's Restaurant at 4999 Factory Shops Blvd to carpool.

Lunch is optional; there are picnic tables in the area. Five-mile loop bird hike. Elevation about 6500 ft. Some up and down. Expect to see Stellar's Jays, Chickadees, and raptors.

**Park County Reservoirs
Tuesday, October 22**

5:00 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Aspen Park Park n'Ride at 26137 Conifer Road, Conifer, Colorado

We'll visit some of the large and small bodies of water in South Park probably including Lake George, Eleven Mile Res, Spinney Mountain Res, and Antero Res. Plan to see migrant waterbirds and a chance for scoters, loons, Long-tailed Duck, and raptors. Car caravan between sites with limited walking. Bring lunch and a scopes, if you have one.

**Bluff Lake Nature Center
Saturday, October 26**

7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Megan Miller

Email: Megan.k.miller2473@gmail.com

Phone: 720-775-9710

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From I-70 East, go south on Havana Street and left onto E 29th Dr, which joins MLK Jr Blvd. Continue on to Bluff Lake Nature Center in the park on left side.

Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat: wetland, yucca, and large cottonwoods. This attracts a variety of raptors and songbirds. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. Paths are easy walking trails. We'll be walking 1-1.5 miles. Scopes are optional.

**First Creek at Denver Open Space
Sunday, October 27**

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Take 1-70 to Peña Blvd. exit. Drive north and exit at 56th Ave. At bottom of ramp, turn left at stoplight and go west under Peña overpasses. Parking lot is 2 blocks ahead on right.

Expect hawks and eagles, falcons, owls, Townsend's Solitaires and more. Expect to walk 3-4 miles of mostly level road and trail. NOTE: No restrooms at this location, so "go before you go" at the King Soopers in nearby Green Valley Ranch (49th and Tower).

**North Park
Tuesday, October 29**

4:30 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Stegosaurus Parking lot along I-70 just west of C470. Take exit 279 off I-70 and the Stegosaurus parking lot is on the SE corner of the intersection.

A full day to visit some of the many bodies of water, marshes and other habitats in North Park in search of a variety of birds and maybe something unexpected. Long drives getting there and back. Bring lunch and a scope, if you have one.

**Halloween Cemetery Tour
(Boulder and Larimer Counties)
Thursday, October 31**

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net

Phone: 303-359-9456

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Spruce Pool, 2102 Spruce St., Boulder.

In honor of Halloween, we will bird a number of cemeteries in the Northern Front Range area during a great time for vagrants showing up in their diverse selection of trees. Likely cemeteries include Green Mountain Cemetery in Boulder, Ryssby Cemetery near Longmont and Grandview Cemetery in Ft. Collins.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Vice President	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summersue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2022)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Steve Ryder (2020)	cedarmesa@yahoo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com
Bea Weaver (2022)	beamiami@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Bea Weaver	beamiami@aol.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com
Conservation	Steve Ryder	cedarmesa@yahoo.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdlIn@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
-----------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

October 28

Birding Ecuador: The good, the bad and the lovely
Chuck Hundertmark

November 25

TBD

January 27

TBD

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 60 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total	\$	_____
-------	----	-------

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
6350 S Havana St, Apt 1212
Englewood, CO 80111-5660



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/NOVEMBER 2019/VOL 55 NO 11

DFOBIRDS.ORG



Top: Chuck Hundertmark
Bottom: Gregg Goodrich
Credit: Rob Raker

Monthly Program

Monday, October 28

Birding Ecuador: The good, the bad and the lovely

Chuck Hundertmark

DFO monthly programs are held at the Unity Spiritual Center of Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd, Denver. Programs begin at 7 PM.

Curious about organized birding trips to South America? Join us on Monday, Oct. 28 when Denver Field Ornithologists Past President Chuck Hundertmark will share his images, along with those captured by Rob Raker, Martin Brookes, Ann Troth, and Gregg Goodrich, on a trip to Ecuador in February 2018. The program will include information about neotropical ecosystems and the challenges and rewards of birding and bird photography in the neotropics. In addition, he will share the dynamics of organized bird tours and what that means for your own plans. Part of this evening presentation will be a short talk by Gregg Goodrich about the “pre-trip” he took to the Galapagos Islands before joining the rest of the group for the main trip.

Ecuador is a great country for birders to begin an exploration of South American birding. The country boasts a list of about 1,635 confirmed species. Hundertmark took his trip there with four other members of DFO. Besides Goodrich and Troth’s Galapagos pre-trip, others traveled beyond the main tour to explore the upper Amazon Basin.

Birders in Ecuador can look forward to seeing varied and colorful neotropical species. Even on chilly days with intermittent rain, an experienced guide can deliver a great birding experience, and a list of dozens more new species in one morning is not out of the question.

Here is a foretaste, in Chuck’s words, of what he and his DFO companions encountered:

With a thick cloud obscuring the sun, dawn was not evident the morning of Feb. 6, 2018, on the observation tower at Santuario de las Aves Rio Silanche. Bundled against the cool, damp air, five DFO birders and a sixth member of the tour group from Britain peered over the mist-shrouded rain forest in hopes of a bird.

Continued on page 2



Lewis' Woodpecker
Credit: David Prentice

MONTHLY PROGRAM cont. from page 1

It was the fourth day of our Northwest and East Slope Ecuador bird watching tour. The previous two days had delivered us excellent lists of varied and colorful neotropical species. In the gloom of the early morning on the tower, it wasn't clear our success would continue. Our tour guide, Lelis Navarrete, however, was scanning the rainforest with confidence.

One of the first birds to appear was a Crimson-rumped Toucanet. Even with ruffled, wet feathers, the distant bird promised an interesting morning. Despite intermittent rain and fogged optics over the next six hours, our group ended the morning with a list of more than 50 species, most of them new for the trip.

Two of our DFO birders had begun the journey with a pre-trip to the Galapagos Islands, 862 miles from Quito. Three of the birders, including the Brit, would travel beyond the main tour to the upper Amazon Basin.

Hundertmark's engaging presentation style and the beautiful photography are sure to make this an excellent program.

DFO Members! Time for Membership Renewal

By Mary Cay Burger

Yes, it is that time of year again. Annual Denver Field Ornithologists memberships expire on Dec. 31, 2019, so please put renewing your membership on your to-do list. You can print the membership form from this newsletter and mail it in, or you can [renew online](#). A DFO membership purchased today will extend for the remainder of 2019 and all of 2020.

You can pay for up to three years at a time and your online profile shows when your membership expires.

Membership fees are modest and help our birding club carry out its mission to promote the study and preservation of birds and their habitats. Your dues make it possible for DFO to have a website, publish a newsletter, and bring you excellent speakers for our monthly programs.

As we enter the season of gift giving, consider purchasing someone a thoughtful and lasting gift—a gift membership in DFO. The membership renewal page of the DFO website includes gift membership information.

Thanks for your past support, and thanks in advance for renewing your DFO membership.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dave Hill, president

Hi, DFO birders —

Think of it: 3 billion birds gone from North America since 1970 . . . a 30 percent drop in the population of breeding birds across all habitat zones. Gosh, that aches the soul and the conscience of any birder!

This recent news of a study published in the journal *Science* isn't just a bad dream. It reflects 50 years of data collected by research institutions in the U.S. and Canada. An excellent article on the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology website](#) summarizes this sobering report.

What you may not know is that Denver Field Ornithologists has been collecting data on bird populations for more than 40 years. In seasonal efforts known as the Spring and Fall Counts, Denver area birders visit the same nine sites during spring and autumn migration to inventory the state of the birds in our area. The data we have collected through the decades provides a picture of North American migrant species in the Denver metropolitan area. The sites are:

- Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield Reservoir (Jefferson County)
- Barr Lake State Park (Adams)
- Barr Lake periphery (Adams)
- Castlewood Canyon State Park (Douglas)
- Chatfield State Park (Jefferson-Douglas)
- Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe)

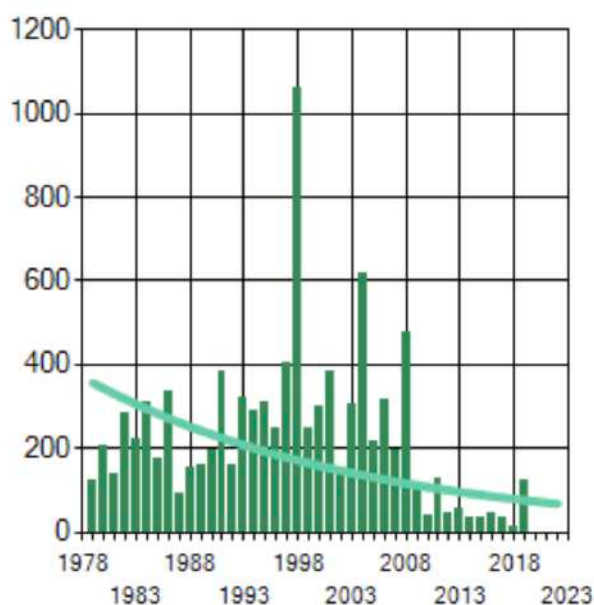
- Lower Bear Creek (Jefferson)
- Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR (Adams)
- Roxborough Road (Douglas)

The data from these counts are being entered on the DFO website and are now available to the general public. Here is how you can access summaries of the numbers we have collected and see what trends have emerged:

1. Go to the DFO website at www.dfobirds.org
2. In the upper right-hand corner of the home page, click on Menu. Select "Birding in the Denver Area"
3. Scroll down to "SPRING/FALL COUNTS," select "COUNT SUMMARY," and click on the round "Fall" button. The number of species at each count site is reported as well as the number of species found for the year
4. To see trends, select "SPECIES TRENDS," clicking on the "Fall" button and selecting a species name. That species' population trend for the past 40 years will be revealed in graph form

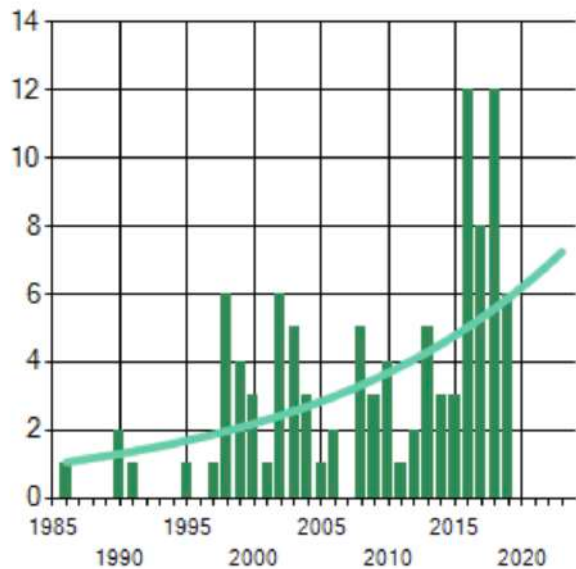
As an example, I've selected trend data for House Sparrow and Bald Eagle here.

House Sparrow trend:



Continued on page 4

Bald Eagle trend:



As you can see by comparing the two graphs, population numbers fluctuate year by year, but overall, House Sparrows have declined in number while Bald Eagles have risen. We can speculate that Bald Eagles, like other raptors, have benefitted from governmental regulation, including the ban on the use of the pesticide DDT. Populations of geese and ducks have grown, too, primarily because of hunters lobbying for protection of wetlands and non-profit organizations like Ducks Unlimited pushing for wetlands acquisitions.

The changes to other bird populations may not be as clear, but data showing trends over time help us identify areas of concern in which more study and action are needed.

Meanwhile, we can all do our part for songbirds. Let's reverse this loss, together, by taking actions to influence change. Here are things we all can do to help:

- Make windows safer, by day and by night
- Keep cats indoors where they cannot pursue their natural instinct to hunt birds
- Landscape with native plants to provide safe resting places, food, and nesting sites
- Avoid pesticides that are lethal to birds and the insects they consume
- Buy "bird-friendly" coffee (shade-grown in forested areas) to avoid having your caffeine habit result in the destruction of important bird habitat
- Protect our planet from plastics that pollute the ocean and harm wildlife
- Watch birds and record what you see with eBird, and join DFO on Spring, Fall and Christmas bird counts
- Fund habitat restoration, preservation and protection by donating to the DFO Grants Fund

For more details, visit the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology website](#). No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

Get Ready for the Christmas Bird Count

By Karen von Saltza

The Denver Christmas Count will be held on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019. This year, for the first time, count organizer Joey Kellner will publish the Denver Christmas Count trips on the Denver Field Ornithologists field trip schedule as DFO assumes coordination of this vital annual task. Beginning Nov. 1, all of these trips will be visible on the [Field Trips page of the DFO website](#).

DFO certified field trip leaders will assist on any Christmas Count trips where previous and continuing trip leaders are not DFO-certified.

Please consider signing up to participate in this important and fun birding activity. Birders of every skill level are invited and encouraged to help out, whether DFO members or not. The data we collect helps paint the broad picture of birds across the continent.

Look for more information in the next issue of *The Lark Bunting* or contact Joey Kellner at vireo1@comcast.net or Karen von Saltza at kvonsaltza@yahoo.com.

September DFO Program Review: There's No Sex Like Insects

By Tim Johnson

Birds love insects, and so do many birders. About 70 DFO insect lovers assembled on Sept. 23 to hear Colorado entomologist Mike Weissmann's freewheeling survey of arthropod strategies for attracting mates, mating, and helping their resulting progeny survive.

Weissmann, an associate of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and adjunct curator of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, gave his *There's No Sex Like Insects* presentation as the September installment in DFO's monthly evening program series.

ATTRACTING A MATE

Insects and other arthropods use a variety of sensory cues to attract mates. Examples of visual cues include soldier beetles, which congregate on yellow composite flowers, and the huge horns on some dung beetles and stag beetles. As an aside, Weissmann shared that his favorite insect is the dead leaf butterfly, which looks like just another fallen leaf when its wings are closed but shows off its spectacular colors when they are open.

Another cue is what we humans would call smell. The feather-like antennae of many moths and leaf-like antennae structures of other insects can sense extremely low levels of some chemicals known as pheromones, which can act like hormones outside the body.

In addition, many insects vocalize their desires. Weissmann said some can even use artificial amplification, like drainpipes, to help broadcast them.

MATING

During his talk, Weissmann showed expert photography of damselflies mating. (Don't take my word for it; I urge readers to view the video of this presentation on the [DFO website](#).) Weissmann talked about the role of genital anatomy in insect taxonomy. In an interesting aside, he discussed parthenogenesis – female self-cloning without male help. Some aphids employ this strategy to boost the population rapidly in favorable conditions during spring and summer. They revert to regular sexual reproduction when conditions are more challenging in the fall.

HELPING PROGENY SURVIVE

Weissmann also discussed and illustrated many evolutionary strategies for boosting the survival of eggs, larvae, pupae, or young. These include:

- Laying eggs on a food supply needed immediately after hatching – a strategy with many variations. Dung Beetles and the Tarantula Hawk (a kind of spider wasp) give a protected meal to a single larva
- Carrying eggs or larvae around with them, a strategy employed by waterbugs and some scorpions
- Appearing disfigured or disguised in the pupal phases to avoid predation
- Providing elaborate care for larvae – a strategy of many social insects. Weissmann's favorite example is the Burying Beetle, which buries small birds or animals. It strips off hair or feathers to line the burial pit, and helps larvae feed by chewing up and regurgitating meat from the carcass. See his time-lapse movie of this!

Although Weissmann did not mention it in the program, it's worth noting that there used to be a lot more insect sex than there is now. Several studies in the United Kingdom, Germany, Puerto Rico and elsewhere suggest appalling declines of 70 percent or more in insect biomass during the 20th and 21st centuries. This has been called the "insect apocalypse."

During the question-and-answer session, an audience member raised this issue. Weissmann identified land use changes and habitat loss as likely culprits for the decline. However, it is likely that the real answer is more complicated and includes pesticide use, agricultural practices, and climate change. At this point, the full geographic extent of the decline is not known, but it seems plausible that decline in insect populations could contribute to the recently reported loss of 30 percent of North American birds over the past 50 years.

Weissmann works in both academic and commercial worlds. He helped create LPS LLC, currently the largest importer of live tropical butterfly pupae in North America. He is also chief entomologist for Vector Disease Control International, a progressive pest control company.

Monthly Programs: Who or what topic would YOU like next?

We hope you're enjoying this fall's lineup of monthly DFO evening programs, either in person or on DFO's [past program videos page](#). Have you seen them? From Denver Parks & Rec's urban wildlife program (including controversial goose culls) to insect sex and this month's upcoming birding abroad in Ecuador, Denver Field Ornithologists aims to present interesting and compelling people and bird-related topics.

Our November program on shrikes (and more) by Colorado birds-and-bugs expert David Leatherman promises to be a big draw. After a break in December, our 2020 lineup will begin. We welcome your own suggestions for next year's programs. What topics or speakers would YOU like to see on the schedule in 2020 and beyond?

DFO Program chair Bill Turner would love to hear your ideas, be they local or national birding figures or bird-related subjects in Colorado, the nation or the world. Send your suggestions to Bill at toursbyturner@aol.com.

Tell Bill who or what you'd like to hear at our monthly program nights, which are the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. The range of ideas and presenters can be broad or as specific as your imagination and desires.

Welcome to New DFO Members

Sangeeta Chakraborty, Denver; Amy Davis, Fort Collins; Jesn Folsom, Superior; Yelana Love, Littleton; Graham Ray, Denver; Giselle Youngblood, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund

Graham Ray

Correction

In the September issue of *The Lark Bunting*, editing changes that we made to Chuck Hundertmark's article *Birds and Trees with David Leatherman* resulted in errors that need to be corrected:

- The field trip portion of the workshop was held in Fairmount Cemetery in Denver, not in Fort Collins.
- This is not the cemetery where Leatherman frequently birds. That is Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins.

The editors apologize to Chuck and to readers of *The Lark Bunting* for these errors.



Gray Catbird
Credit: David Prentice

November: What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO BIRDERS: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

By Ira Sanders

In November, the average high temperature in Denver is 57 degrees, 4 degrees higher than it was 10 years ago. The average low temperature is 27 degrees, up 2 degrees from 10 years ago. These temperatures are down 9 degrees on the high and the low from October. The thermometer has reached as high as 79 degrees and has fallen to -8 degrees. Alamosa once recorded -30 degrees in November. Average snow fall for Denver in November is 8.2 inches, but as much as 39.1 inches has also fallen during this month.

Bald Eagles start arriving in numbers in November at locales like Barr Lake in Adams County, Marston Reservoir in Denver County and the Colorado River on the western slope. Look for **Short-eared Owls** on fence posts and floating over fields like big moths at and near the Wellington State Wildlife Area east of Wellington on Larimer County Road 64 and Lower Latham Reservoir near La Salle in Weld County. Don't rule out finding these owls at other places in Colorado, as I had one in the foothills west of our house in Golden in January 2004 and January 2006. Also look for them in the southwestern valleys of the state. Be careful not to confuse **Northern Harriers** (whose numbers increase this time of year) with Short-eareds, as they both hunt in similar habitat. Look for both at the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge near Alamosa.

Rough-legged Hawks are generally the last winter visitors to arrive in our state to hunt over wetlands and grasslands for mice and voles. They are a little smaller than the Ferruginous Hawks that hang out around prairie

dog towns looking for a meal. A good place to look for Rough-leggeds as well as **Merlins** is the plains in and east of the Pawnee National Grasslands. Pay special attention to the power line structures and you will probably find a **Prairie Falcon** among the many other raptors. While you are there, watch for flocks of **Horned Larks**, which may contain **Lapland Longspurs** and **Snow Buntings**.

Pinyon Jays and **Clark's Nutcrackers** roam many square miles between 5,000 and 9,000 feet in elevation, searching for piñon pines with a good nut crop. A single nutcracker can cache 30,000 seeds for the winter. Places with good stands of piñon pine include: Dinosaur National Monument, north of Rangely; Colorado National Monument, near Grand Junction; Mesa Verde National Park in the far southwestern corner of the state; Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, near Montrose; State Highway 115 between Colorado Springs and Canon City; and Owl Canyon, northwest of Ft. Collins.

As many as six different species of geese arrive in November. Large numbers of **Canada** (not Canadian) and **Cackling Geese** can be found in many places in the state. A good place to study Cackling Geese (split from Canada Goose in 2004) is Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Golden. Hundreds of these small geese, some as small as Mallards, can be found there in the winter. Barr Lake hosts thousands of "white-cheeked" geese at this time of year, and mixed in can be quite a few **Snow Geese** and some **Ross's Geese**. The challenge is to pick out **Greater White-fronted Geese** and maybe a **Brant**. I've never seen a Brant at Barr Lake, but they have been found at Union Reservoir in western Weld County, Long Lake in Larimer County, Utah Park in Arapahoe County, Pueblo Reservoir in Pueblo County and Inverness Business Park in Douglas County. At the larger lakes, you will need a scope.

The South Platte River is very attractive to waterfowl when the weather gets cold and lakes and ponds start to freeze. The stretch of river between 88th and 74th avenues is excellent for waterfowl in general, including

Continued on page 8

Barrow's Goldeneye and perhaps a **Long-tailed Duck**, though the chance of seeing these birds on the river increases in December and later in the winter.

Until the mountain reservoirs I mentioned in the October column freeze-over, they are still great places for loons and scoters. Be sure to watch for **Red-necked Grebes** in these reservoirs and especially at Pueblo Reservoir where they show up with regularity. Also from last month, November is the prime time for **Ancient** and **Long-billed Murrelets** in Colorado. Keep your eyes open for these rare, small bouncing corks anywhere in the state.

Also in November, the last of the shorebirds come through (**Dowitchers**, **Black-bellied** and **American Golden Plovers**, **Sanderlings**, **Least Sandpipers**) with a chance for some "rare" species such as **Dunlin**. A Dunlin was in the South Platte River just downstream from Chatfield Reservoir in the winter of 2008-2009 and stayed from December through at least January.

Gulls become more abundant, with more rare and unusual species showing up. **Iceland Gulls** have become annual along with **Glaucous**, **Lesser Black-backed** and **Great Black-backed Gulls**. Since 1993, there has been at least one Great Black-backed Gull at Pueblo Reservoir.

I remember when Lesser Black-backed Gulls were rare and the first state record Iceland Gull was found in Pueblo in January 1999. Now, the former can be found almost anywhere along the Front Range and the latter has become easier to find, as Thayer's Gull was lumped with Iceland Gull in 2017 after being split from Herring Gull in 1973. I doubt that the American Ornithological Society has made up its mind on this species as there is speculation Thayer's may once again be a separate species. Watch for **Little Gull** and **Black-legged Kittiwake** in all the places that gulls gather. **Bonaparte's Gulls** show up in numbers at Pueblo Reservoir and other lakes in the state.

Some passerines are at their peak in November. Migrant **White-crowned** and **White-throated Sparrows** can be found in brushy areas and **Harris's Sparrows** can be found in places like the Arkansas River Walks in Pueblo and Cañon City. **Winter Wrens** and the occasional **Rusty Blackbird** may also appear. **Townsend's Solitaires** appear on the plains and in the foothills, though they aren't that solitary this time of year. Look for them around groups of junipers and other conifers. Red Rocks Park, Chatfield State Park, Crow Valley Campground and various hedgerows on the plains are good places to look.

Happy birding!



Eastern Kingbird
Credit: Cathy Olin

Better Birding Workshops: What's your pleasure?

Denver Field Ornithologists' still-new program of Better Birding Workshops for DFO members is going gangbusters – and there are more on the horizon in 2020, from a classroom-and-field course in winter gulls to a birding photography seminar.

Better Birding Committee chair Karen Drozda is lining up more interesting courses to help you become a better birder. But she and her committee are also hungry for more good ideas from you.

So, what birding topics or speakers do you think would improve, enhance and enrich YOUR birding skills? The only limits are your imagination and desire to become a better birder.

Contact Karen and the committee soon with your ideas. Email them at drozforte@aol.com. Thanks!

November Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks and/or lunch, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. December field trips will appear on the website on November 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Mountain Lakes and Scoter Trip Saturday, November 2

6:00 AM - 6:30 PM

Joey Kellner

Email: vireo1@comcast.net

Phone: 303-978-1748

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Join an all-day search for migrant grebes, loons, and scoters. Bring lunch and be for the wide variety of driving conditions November can bring. A State Parks pass is required for the drivers of carpooling vehicles.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, November 3

7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger & Robert Righter

Email: mcburger3@juno.com

Phone: 720-940-8394

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Bring a scope if you have one. State Parks or day use pass required.

North-Central Colorado Tuesday, November 5

5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

We will explore Summit and Grand Counties, birding several large reservoirs in search of interesting migrant waterbirds like scoters, grebes loons and rare gulls, among others. Bring a lunch and a scope, if you have one. We will carpool from the meeting site.

Belmar Historic Park Sunday, November 10

7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

We'll stroll around Kountze Lake and neighboring wetland ponds to check on winter visitors. We may look in on Weir Gulch on the south side of the park, too. This is a good trip for beginners and the trail around the lake is accessible for wheelchairs and walkers.

Northeastern Colorado Tuesday, November 12

5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

This trip out the I-76 corridor will seek interesting waterbirds, raptors, and migrant landbirds of the late fall season. Possible counties include Morgan, Washington, Logan, Sedgwick and Phillips. Itinerary to be announced before the trip. Bring a scope if you have one. Strenuous for long drives; some walking through grasses and vegetation possible. Bring lunch.

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Wednesday, November 13

7:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Tim Ryan & Diane Roberts

Email: Tryan4thebirds@yahoo.com

Phone: 720-545-5084

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

We will bird at the Barr CCC Park in Parker, then take the Parker Water Department bus into Rueter-Hess Reservoir, which is not open to the public. Bring a scope if you have one.

Pueblo area

Saturday, November 16

6:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Ira Sanders & Tammy Sanders

Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com

Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Bring a spotting scope and walkie-talkie's if you have them. We will be birding Pueblo City Park, Valco Ponds, Pueblo Lake State Park and other areas at the leader's discretion. State Park's Pass or day use pass needed for each vehicle.

Bluff Lake Nature Center Saturday, November 16

8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Megan Miller

Email: Megan.k.miller2473@gmail.com

Phone: 7207759710)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat: wetland, yucca, and large cottonwoods. This attracts a variety of raptors and songbirds. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. We'll be walking 1-1.5 miles on easy trails. Bring a scope if you have one.

Denver City Park (Denver County) Sunday, November 17

7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy



Pied-billed Grebe
Credit: Chuck Hundertmark

Welcome back winter visitors to central Denver's urban bird oasis. Expect to see several kinds of ducks, as well as songbirds. Expect to walk 3 miles on sidewalks, flat lawns and lakeshores. Bring a scope if you have one.

Pueblo area

Monday, November 18

5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

This trip will visit hotspots that have a good chance for rare birds at this time of year, including Lake Pueblo, Pueblo City Park, the nearby Arkansas River corridor, and other spots farther afield. Bring lunch and a scope, if you have one. Up to 2 miles of walking.

Cherry Creek State Park

(Arapahoe County)

Saturday, November 23

7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger & Robert Righter

Email: mcburger3@juno.com

Phone: 720-940-8394

Trail Difficulty: Easy

We will look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Bring a scope, if you have one. State Parks Pass or day use pass required.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park

Tuesday, November 26

6:30 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Dawn at the reservoir is always fun, with gulls and geese and other waterbirds. After we visit Cherry Creek State Park for a look at what is going on there, we may visit another area or chase a rare bird in the local area. Bring a scope if you have one.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

Friday, November 29

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Jill Boice

Email: jill@booksandcats.net

Phone: 303-863-7580

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Eat too much for Thanksgiving? Enjoy casual birding at Rocky Mountain National Wildlife Refuge to walk it off. Be prepared to help identify any birds seen, as leader is more enthusiastic than skillful. Bring lunch.

South Platte River Trail

at E 88th Ave and I-76

Saturday, November 30

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Chuck Hundertmark

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

We'll look particularly for Barrow's Goldeneyes. We should see lots of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trail and occasionally in the adjacent mud for up to 3 miles.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Vice President	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summersue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Drozda (2021)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2021)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Chris Goulart (2022)	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Steve Ryder (2020)	cedarmesa@yahoo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com
Bea Weaver (2022)	beamiami@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
------------------	--------------	--------------------

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Diane Roberts	720-278-9025
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Chris Goulart	cgoulart001@comcast.net
Nominating	Bea Weaver	beamiami@aol.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com
Conservation	Steve Ryder	cedarmesa@yahoo.com

THE LARK BUNTING

Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdlIn@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
-----------	--------------------

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

November 25

November 25, 2019
I Like Shrikes (And More)
David Leatherman

January 27

TBD

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 60 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:
Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
6350 S Havana St, Apt 1212
Englewood, CO 80111-5660



THE LARK BUNTING

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

VOLUME 55 | ISSUE 12 | DECEMBER 2019

DFOBIRDERS.ORG

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last straw – for the birds
and our planet

UPCOMING PROGRAM

I Like Shrikes (and More)
Dave Leatherman
November 25

PROGRAM REVIEW

Birding Ecuador: the good,
the bad, and the lovely

FEATURED ARTICLE

DFO to help lead 66th
Denver Christmas
Bird Count on December 14

PHOTO OF THE MONTH >>

Cedar Waxwing in Hawthorne Bush

📷 Jim Esten

📍 Denver, Colorado





I Like Shrikes (and More)

Monday, November 25
Dave Leatherman

DFO's November program will be mostly about shrikes, a pair of species our elders referred to as "butcher bird." In truth, they are no more brutal than a chickadee that gobbles 300 aphids alive for brunch; they just do their killing out in the open and hang it high for the observant birder to see.

In so doing, shrikes offer insight into their fascinating life style. Career forest entomologist and active birder Dave Leatherman will discuss the cycle of the Loggerhead Shrike on the eastern plains of Colorado, touch on its winter relative the Northern Shrike, and see how you feel about these raptorial songbirds when it's all said and done. Are they butchers? Depends of what's impaled and which of us is the judge.

The evening will finish with screen-projected photos intended to test your identification skills. The teacher (Leatherman) will not call on you but you are welcome to shout out your brave opinions. No guess is a bad guess. Each ID will be discussed as a learning exercise. It's an open book quiz so bring your field guide.

Leatherman was born and raised in Columbus, OH. Interested in nature since childhood, he counts his early mentors as Dr. Edward Thomas and Milton Trautmann. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Marietta College and a master's in forestry from Duke University.

Leatherman served as the forest entomologist for the Colorado State Forest Service from 1974 to 2005. He is active in the Colorado Field Ornithologists, has seen 457 species in the state, and been part of finding four First State Records, the latest being a 2016 Couch's Kingbird in Lamar. His passion for the last 30 years has been investigating the food habits of Colorado birds, chronicled in his "The Hungry Bird" column in CFO's quarterly journal, *Colorado Birds*.

7 PM | Free and open to the public
Unity Spiritual Center of Denver
3021 S. University Blvd.
Denver, Colorado

The Lark Bunting is the official newsletter of the Denver Field Ornithologists. It is published monthly except for August. Submissions of original articles should be made to the editor at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Image files of photos of birds or of bird outings should be made to the photo editor at jcesten@gmail.com. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

PUBLICATION

Editors

Sharon Tinianow
Pat O'Driscoll

Photo Editor

Jim Esten

Layout and Design

Jennie Dillon

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Dave Hill

Vice President

Susan Blansett

Secretary

Debbie James

Treasurer

Sue Summers

Membership Chair

Mary Cay Burger

Karen Drozda
Chris Goulart
Kristine Haglund
Chuck Hundertmark
Pat O'Driscoll
Steve Ryder
Ira Sanders
Sharon Tinianow
Bill Turner
Bea Weaver
Karen von Saltza

© 2019 Denver Field Ornithologists
All rights reserved.

Birding Ecuador: the good, the bad, and the lovely

Tim Johnson

On Oct. 28, about 60 DFO members turned out to hear Chuck Hundertmark and Gregg Goodrich revisit their birding trip to Ecuador in February 2018. Four other companions shared the adventure, and they were led by well-known guide and author Lelis Navarette. Their talk also included descriptions of a pre-trip by Goodrich and Ann Troth to Ecuador's Antisana Ecological Reserve and the Galapagos.

Hundertmark summarized the trip by explaining the title of the presentation. The “good” things were the food and lodging, the companions, and the birding. The “bad” things were endless rain and associated low visibility, long drives on occasionally sketchy roads, and the lack of ability to return to especially productive sites. The “lovely” referred, of course, to the birds themselves. He recommended May as the least rainy month and noted that many types of tours exist to suit individual interests: birding, conservation, nature in general, photography, and so forth.

Ecuador's terrain covers 109,453 square miles, just a bit larger than Colorado. The terrain ranges in elevation from sea level to above 20,000 feet. The incredible diversity of habitats in a relatively small area is one reason why 1,635 bird species have been recorded there.

I can't resist pointing out that Ecuador could be considered the birthplace of the sciences of biogeography and ecology. The renowned naturalist Alexander von Humboldt visited Ecuador's mountains in 1802, and according to

Continued on page 5



Crimson-rumped Toucanet
Chuck Hundertmark



Blue-winged Mountain Tanager
Chuck Hundertmark



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last straw – for the birds and our planet

Dave Hill, President

I was reading *Outside* magazine the other day and was inspired by an article that began by talking about plastic straws in the news this past summer. Author Marc Peruzzi acknowledges that plastic straws are indefensible. He says that an estimated 390 million of them go into our landfills DAILY. Too many of them never make it into the trash but end up in the flow of litter into the environment.

In fact, plastic straws are among the top 10 components of the vast and worsening blight of plastic marine debris across the globe. Nearly 7.5 million plastic straws were found along U.S. shorelines during a recent cleanup research project.¹ So much needless destruction, and from such a needless form of waste. Yes, straws are necessary, everyday tools for the sick and disabled, but most people can get along fine without them.

Sharon Tinianow assisted me with some research on the plastic straw issue. They may be small, but their impact is insidious, especially on the birds we all love to watch and work to conserve. Straws are made of type 5 plastic, which most recycling programs don't accept. Discarded straws break down in the environment to microplastics that birds and fish on which they prey ingest. These tiny bits are everywhere in the marine world: in 59 percent of seabirds, 100 percent of sea turtle species and more than 25 percent of fish sampled from seafood markets around the world.²

You have probably seen the images of marine wildlife lying dead on beaches and islands. As birders especially, our hearts break at the sight of an albatross carcass beside what killed it – all the colorful plastic bits and pieces consumed when the seabird mistook them for floating food. Did you know that by 2050, virtually every seabird species on the planet will be eating plastic?³ It is estimated that 1 million seabirds die each year from ingesting plastic, including straws.⁴

Against this dire outlook, what can we do as individuals? Although change requires sacrifice, it's not much harder than

saying “no” to plastic straws and recycling plastic waste. Choose the right over the easy, and the environmental effects can be minimized. Consider doing the following:

- Support brands that use recyclable materials. Visit the [Plastic Soup website](#) to learn what the numbered designations mean for different plastic products.
- Educate yourself about what goes where when it comes to recycling. Check out the video on the [Recycle Across America website](#).
- Check out your municipality's own resources for waste and recycling. A great example is Denver's [Refuse and Reuse pledge](#).
- Think before you drink! Aluminum or glass containers are always preferable to plastic. Reusable is better than single-use.
- Take the DFO “Bring A Bag When You Bird Challenge” – see Susan Blansett's article in this newsletter and learn all about it.

Peruzzi goes on to state that we need to do a lot more than ban plastic straws. Even cutting single-use plastics is a just a start. He advocates for a green revolution and says that our hearts and souls need to stretch beyond our individuality and find ways to work collectively. We all play a part in this problem – and in fixing it, for the sake of ourselves . . . and the birds.

Marc Peruzzi, is a contributing editor for Outside magazine. His article, Inconvenient Truths, appeared in the November 2019 issue.

Sources

¹ Borenstein, Seth. (2018). *Science Says: Amount of straws, plastic pollution is huge*. Retrieved from <https://phys.org/news/2018-04-science-amount-straws-plastic-pollution.html>

² The Ocean Conservancy. *Fighting for Trash Free Seas*. Retrieved from <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/> November 2019.

³ Our Last Straw Facts and Figures. Retrieved from <https://www.ourlaststraw.org/facts-figures> November 2019.

⁴ Get Green Now blog. (2018). *The Environmental Impact of Plastic Straws – Facts, Statistics, and Infographic*. <https://get-green-now.com/environmental-impact-plastic-straws/>

Gifts, Grants, and One More Membership Reminder

Mary Cay Burger and Sharon Tinianow

Last month we reminded our readers that it is membership renewal time. Annual Denver Field Ornithologists memberships expire on Dec. 31, 2019. You can print the membership form from this newsletter and mail it in, or you can [renew online](#). You can pay for up to three years at a time and your online profile shows when your membership expires.

A DFO membership makes a great gift for the birders and aspiring birders on your gift list. It's a great way to connect to the birding community in the front range. And for those new to birding, what better way to get started? The membership renewal page of the DFO website includes gift membership information.

And finally, consider a year-end donation to the DFO Research, Education and Conservation Grants Fund. The fund helps fulfill an important part of DFO's mission: *the preservation of birds and their habitats*. It's easy to donate: Just add the amount you wish to contribute in the designated field online when you renew your membership.

These modest grants provide critical support for scientists and educators whose work contributes to our larger understanding of birds and bird conservation. Last year, DFO members funded nearly \$6,000 in new grants for these worthy projects. You can find out more about past projects and how to donate on the [DFO website](#). Thank you in advance for your consideration.

BIRDING ECUADOR *continued from page 3*

the journal *Science* (Sept. 13, 2019), it was there that he first recorded in his notes the central epiphany of ecology – that everything is connected. Humboldt also introduced the concept of isotherms – zones of similar temperature and climate that connect mountains across the globe and correlate ecosystems with both altitude and latitude. These ideas have only gained in importance since Humboldt's time.

On this single trip, Hundertmark spotted about 502 of Ecuador's 1,635 species. Among the highlights of the trip, by location:

- **Sachatamia Lodge:** a large variety of tanagers and hummingbirds. The tanager family is highly diverse in Central and South America, representing about 12 percent of neotropical species or roughly 300. The same is true of hummingbirds; about 130 species have been recorded in Ecuador
- **Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary:** six hours in a canopy-level tower in the rain, but lots of variety
- **Yanacocha Reserve:** Sword-billed hummingbird
- **Cabanas San Isidro:** San Isidro Owl
- **Bella Vista Lodge:** Masked Trogon and White-throated Quail Dove
- **Yarina Lodge:** Hoatzin and five species of owl

Goodrich's pre-trip to the high portions of the Antisana, a 500-square-mile preserve surrounding the Antisana volcano, netted him Andean Condors. His sojourn in the Galapagos was unusual in that it was undertaken from a land base rather than from aboard a cruise ship. Goodrich and Troth joined the rest of the group in Quito, Ecuador's capital city, whence they journeyed to a number of birding hotspots.

If you wish to see a comprehensive list of birds the group saw, lodges they stayed in, and their driving or hiking itineraries, consult the video on the Past Programs page of the [DFO website](#). The presentation consists primarily of about 80 slides, each containing multiple bird images, and a few maps with itineraries. If you missed the presentation, it is well worth viewing.

DFO to help lead 66th Denver Christmas Bird Count on December 14

Joey Kellner

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the annual Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored the National Audubon Society on Saturday, Dec. 14. There is no fee to participate, so no excuses. Come have a great time and help count birds. Whether you are a beginner, a novice, or an expert, all are welcome!

Here is how it works:

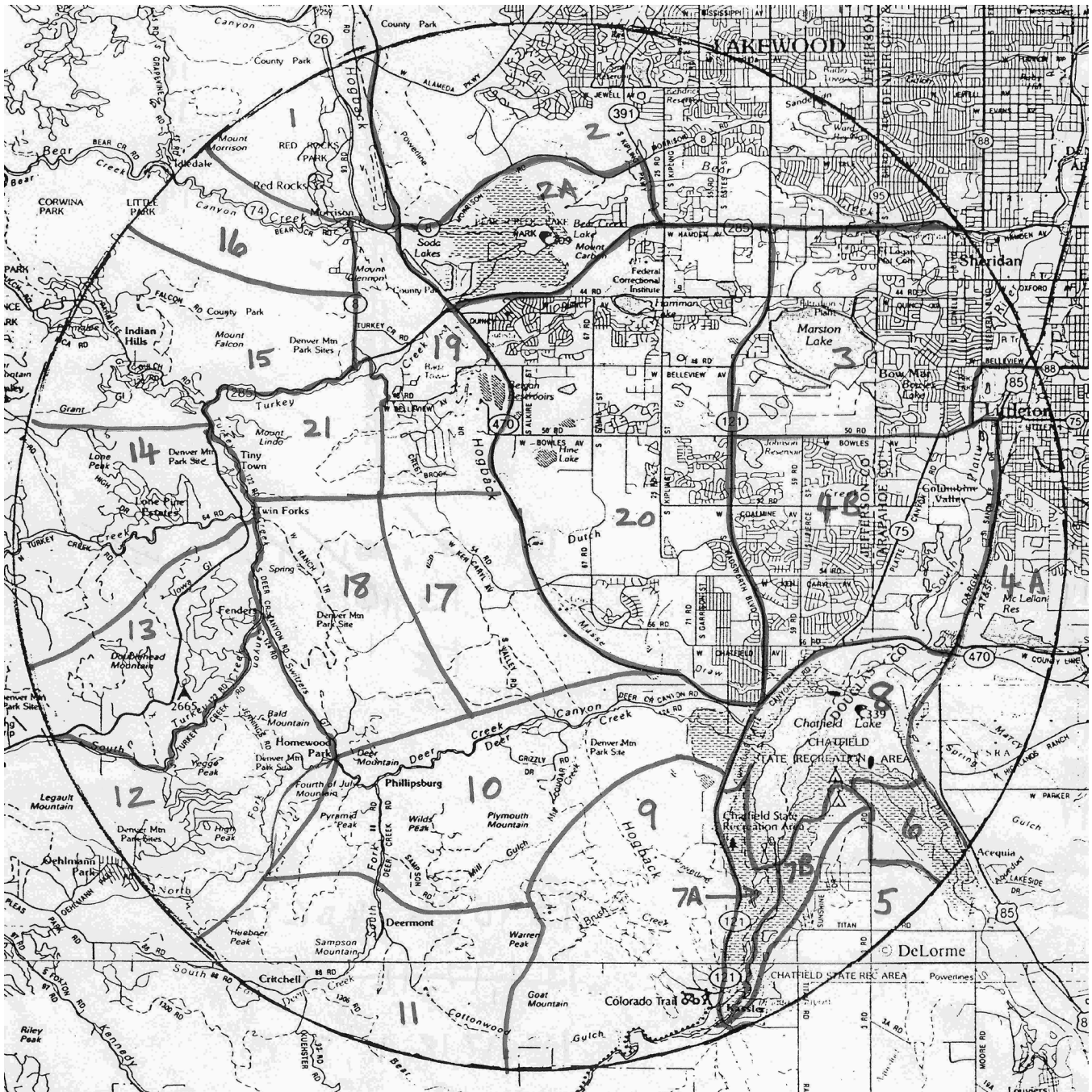
The 15-mile diameter “count circle” is subdivided into 24 “count areas,” each with an area leader and a DFO field trip leader. This is new this year, with all count areas having been set up as separate DFO field trips. To participate, [sign-up online at the DFO website](#) just as you would for any DFO field trip. Alternatively, you can contact the area leader directly using the list below. If you would like to help in an area that still needs additional observers, contact Denver CBC count compiler Joey Kellner by phone at 303-978-1748 or via email at SWDenverBirding@gmail.com. Bob Shade is serving as the coordinator for bird feeder reports within the count area, which covers a circle from Jewell and Wadsworth in the northeast around to Red Rocks Park, Idledale, Indian Hills, Tinytown, Waterton and Chatfield State Park, McLellan Reservoir, to Littleton town hall. Feeder volunteers can contact Bob at 303-975-2476 or wrshade3@gmail.com.

Area number and location	Area leader	Phone number	DFO leader
1. Red Rocks Park	Dan Stringer	720-854-5911	Wendy Webbings
2. Lower Bear Creek	Scott Somershoe	615-829-3573	Dale Pate
2A. Bear Creek Lake Park	Mary Geder	303-981-8823	Mary Geder
3. Bow Mar/Marston	Bill Hopping	303-809-3053	Mary Cay Burger
4A. Lower South Platte - East	Ed Holub	303-979-2194	Colleen Nunn
4B. Lower South Platte - West	Dean Shoup	720-272-9042	TBD
5. Highline Ditch	Nancy Crews	303-842-2833	Doris Cruze
6. Plum Creek	Norm Erthal	303-917-2596	Christie Owens
7A. Middle South Platte - West	Charlie Lawrence	303-795-9126	Megan Miller
7B. Middle South Platte - East	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723	Bea Weaver
8. Chatfield State Park	Joey Kellner	303-978-1748	Joey Kellner
9. Upper South Platte *	Jill Holden	720-288-4018	Mary Keithler
10. Lower Deer Creek (Chatfield Arboretum)	Michael Lester	201-306-8221	Ira Sanders
11. Upper Deer Creek	Paul Slingsby	720-347-5169	Paul Slingsby
12. Yegge Peak	Cynthia Madsen	303-770-6534	Cynthia Madsen
13. Doublehead Mountain	Amy Davis	303-549-7759	TBD
14. North Turkey Creek	TBD		TBD
15. Indian Hills	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217	Gregg Goodrich
16. Upper Bear Creek	Laura Steadman	843-319-5086	Laura Steadman
17. Ken Caryl Ranch	Tom Bush	303-919-5040	Karen Drozda
18. West Ranch	Bob Shade	303-975-2476	Patrick O'Driscoll
19. Morrison/Willowbrook	Chris Gilbert	804-214-1508	Chris Gilbert
20. Willow Creek	David Suddjian	831-713-8658	David Suddjian
21. Mount Lindo/Willow Springs	Bob Shade	303-975-2476	Patrick O'Driscoll

* To participate in this area, you must contact the area leader no later than Monday, Nov. 25.

Continued on page 7

After spending a day in the field counting birds, all participants are invited to attend the compilation meeting and potluck to feast, warm up, chat with other birders, and find out how the count fared. It is a lot of fun. The compilation meeting will begin at approximately 5 p.m. at Chatfield State Park headquarters, located on the south side of the reservoir near the Heronry Overlook. A Colorado State Parks vehicle entry pass or day use pass is required, so please carpool if possible. Feel free to bring a dish or desert to share at the potluck that follows. Cheryl Teuton will once again coordinate the potluck. Please contact her at 303-912-3341 to let her know what dish you can bring.



DFO-funded research: Chatfield bird diversity before reservoir expansion

Project title: Bird diversity in Chatfield State Park before implementation of the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Plan

Authors: Dr. Erin Bissell, Rani Lamberty and Vinson Turco

In 2017, DFO awarded \$1,800 to Dr. Erin Bissel of Metropolitan State University of Denver to study bird diversity at Chatfield State Park before the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Plan began tree removal, grading and other extensive reconstruction work. This article by the project authors describes the study and its findings through 2018.

Chatfield State Park provides critical bird habitat in the Denver metro area and is designated an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, with more than 350 bird species observed in the park, 212 of which qualify as resident or frequently seen.¹ The park is also a popular recreational destination, with more than 1.6 million visitors a year.² Located at the confluence of Plum Creek and the South Platte River, the park's Chatfield Reservoir provides flood control for Denver and water rights to surrounding municipalities. With the state's population forecast to double by 2050, rapid population growth will create more demand for water. In response to this growing demand, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project in 2017 to increase water retention in the reservoir.³

Increased flooding of parklands because of the reallocation plan could eliminate an estimated 562 acres of shoreline habitat. The affected acreage includes two distinct types of riparian cottonwood forests – younger, dense stands of cottonwood (stand forest) and more widely spaced, older legacy trees (legacy forest).³ In 2016, we began a long-term study to estimate bird abundance and diversity in these habitats. Both forest types are likely to experience lengthier flooding during spring snowmelt runoff as a result of the reallocation plan, but younger trees may not be as resilient

to the projected changes in hydrology. One goal of our preliminary data collection was to evaluate differences in birds' use of habitat in the two forest types. Our study also offers training opportunities for undergraduate ornithology and botany students in the Biology Department at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Ornithology students conducted the bird counts reported here and botany students collected vegetation data at the same sites.

In 2016, before reallocation plan work began, we identified 10 sites in the stand forest and 10 in the legacy forest for data collection. In 2017, we reduced the number of sites to five each so that we could also collect data at three control sites in Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms just upstream on Deer Creek from the park. Three additional control sites were added in 2018 at Bear Creek Lake Park about 5 miles northwest of Chatfield. (None of the control sites will experience modifications with the Reallocation Plan.) At each site, a focal tree or stand was designated as the location for bird point counts and vegetation data collection. Point counts began with a five-minute acclimation period, when observers stood silently to allow birds to recover from disturbance caused by the observers' approach. During a five-minute observation period immediately after each acclimation period, two observers identified and recorded all birds seen or heard within a 50-meter radius as well as their estimated distance from the point of observation. The counts began at sunrise and typically finished before 9 a.m. Both observers relied primarily on audio detection, with visual confirmations typically only within 15-20 meters because of obstructions by the tree canopy. Observers conducted the counts individually and then compared notes at the end of the count. Birds recorded by the observers were typically consistent, with

Continued on page 9



MSU students assessing
habitat at Bear Creek
Erin Bissell

DFO-FUNDED RESEARCH *continued from page 8*

occasional exceptions when a bird was not recorded by both. After reconciling the lists, the observers recorded bird species, number of individuals, and their distance from the observers.

Several bird species were commonly observed during most point counts and remained consistent across years. During spring and summer, the bubbly song of House Wrens dominated, and when they were not singing, their chattering and scolding from the underbrush resonated throughout the area. Another prominent song heard during data collection was the “sweet sweet, I’m so sweet” of the Yellow Warbler. We also observed Black-capped Chickadees during most counts, and when the House Wrens and Yellow Warblers left for the winter, the “chicka-dee-dee” and soft whistles of the chickadees remained and became even more prominent. We also observed many other residential regulars to the Front Range, including Spotted Towhees, Northern Flickers, Song Sparrows, White-breasted Nuthatches and American Robin. We also observed migrants such as Gray Catbirds.

Analysis of the 2016 and 2017 data indicated no difference in the number of bird species between the two habitat types but more individuals in the older, legacy sites. In 2018, we compared bird counts with vegetation data and found that the number of bird species is influenced, in part, by specific aspects of the plant understory. Before the reservoir reallocation work began, more bird species were associated with sites that had less canopy cover and lower tree density.

During the winter and spring of 2018-2019, reallocation work removed dense shrub undergrowth, dead snags, and unhealthy cottonwood trees from areas projected to be in the expanded floodplain. Given the bird species observations described above, it is possible that these changes may improve existing bird habitat. On the other hand, removal of this vegetation may reduce food resources and shelter for resident bird species. We plan to continue observing how these changes in tree density and plant understory influence bird diversity and abundance in the affected areas.

We want to thank Denver Field Ornithologists for providing funding for this project. This project could not be sustained without ongoing participation of current and former undergraduate students at MSU Denver, including Gabriel Davis, Amy Dehring-Jensen, Kayla Drake, Kevin Dykstra, Kasi Garcia, and Ricky Martinez, who helped Rani Lamberty and Vinson Turco conduct bird counts. Joel Such, a high school student, also participated in the bird counts. Shania McCain, Ashley Purcell, Colette Ramey, Kayla Bridges Starr, and Trevor Starr helped Dr. Bissell collect vegetation data. Dr. Nels Grevsted and MSU Denver alumnus J.P. DeLong assisted with statistical analyses. We received additional financial support from the Colorado Field Ornithologists and the Marr Fund of the Colorado Native Plant Society. Equipment was provided by the Biology Department at MSU Denver.

Sources:

¹ Ornithology A and CL of Ebird [Online]. [Accessed March 1, 2017]. Available from: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird>.

² Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project. 2017. [Accessed 2019 Oct 31]. Available from: <https://chatfieldreallocation.org/about/chatfield-state-park/>

³ ERO Resources Corporation and Tetra Tech EC. 2013. Chatfield reservoir compensatory mitigation plan prepared for the Army Corps of Engineers.

What birds to look for and where to look for them

DFO Birders: In 2019, *The Lark Bunting* is re-running a series of popular columns from 2009 that may be helpful once again. The purpose of these columns is to give you an idea of what birds to look for that month and where to find them. I have enlisted the help of some well-known birders around the state. We hope this column will be of use in your 2019 birding.

Ira Sanders

In December, the average high in Denver is 47 degrees and the average low is 19, both up 2 degrees from 10 years ago. The high is down 10 degrees and the low is down 8 degrees from November, although it has reached 75 degrees and has fallen to minus-25 degrees in the past. Alamosa has recorded a low of minus-42 degrees. Average snowfall for Denver in December is 8.1 inches. The greatest amount of snowfall recorded in Denver was 45.7 inches and occurred from one multiday storm in 1913. By comparison, the March 2003 blizzard left 31.8 inches at Stapleton and 19 inches at DIA.

Many of the places I pointed out last month are still good bets for waterfowl in December. The South Platte River, Barr Lake, and Cherry Creek and Chatfield state parks' reservoirs won't be frozen over in December. Pueblo Reservoir at Pueblo Lake State Park doesn't freeze over and is good all winter. If you want to see **loons**, with a good possibility of seeing four of the five North American species (though all five have been seen in Colorado), good places to look are Marston Reservoir in Denver County, Lake Pueblo, Standley Lake in Jefferson County, Boulder and Baseline Reservoirs in Boulder County, as well as Cherry Creek and Chatfield Reservoirs.

Gulls (yes, I know that is a dirty word to some birders) become more abundant with a greater variety as December marches along. Cherry Creek State Park has had **Glaucous-winged Gull**

more than once and on one occasion, I saw eight species of gulls just at the marina. Lake Loveland, the Larimer County landfill, and Horseshoe Lake in Larimer County can have great variety as can the reservoir that lies between Interstate 76 and the South Platte just north of 74th Avenue in Adams County. More than one **Glaucous Gull** was here on New Year's Day 2009. At times you can get 10 species of gulls at Lake Pueblo at the south marina.

Gyr Falcon is a rarity that may show up in winter in Colorado. Last winter there was a Gyr at the Larimer County Landfill for at least several weeks. However, because eBird has been changed to hide dates and locations for certain sensitive species, even if long gone from where they were seen accidentally, I can't tell you the exact dates though it was reported on Dec. 27, 2018. [Editor's note: As of this writing, a Gyr Falcon was reported in the same Larimer County location on Sunday, Nov. 3 and was seen again Nov. 4 and 5.] The area around the Rawhide power plant, north of Ft. Collins can also be a good area to check, but one could be found anywhere on the eastern plains if there is a southward eruption of this impressive falcon, the largest in the world. You also can't rule out the mountains, either, as one was seen at Walden Reservoir in Jackson County from Nov. 5 to Dec. 24, 2006.

Snow Bunting is another rarity that may be found on the eastern plains or in the mountains. These birds like the edge of lakes and reservoirs as evidenced by sightings at Jackson Lake State Park in Morgan County, Prewitt State Wildlife Area in Washington and Logan counties, Pueblo Lake near the dam and, in 2008, at Antero Reservoir in Park County. When you encounter flocks of **Horned Larks** on the prairies, scan for birds with large white wing patches and, if you see it, you have your Snow Bunting.

Long-eared Owls are another visitor that is easier to find starting in December. The Russian olives at Jackson Lake State Park annually host these owls and they have also been seen at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR and Barr Lake State Park. If you are feeling very hardy, Guanella Pass above Georgetown is a spot to look for **White-tailed Ptarmigan** in their snow-white winter plumage. Look under willows and for signs of them in the droppings and tracks they leave. Ptarmigan can actually gain weight over the winter by feeding on willow buds. The paving project over Guanella Pass was completed in 2015 so access is easy if the road isn't closed by snow.

Continued on page 11

Introducing the DFO Bring-a-Bag-When- You-Bird Challenge

Susan Blansett

After a recent experience on a DFO field trip, an idea came to me. What if we all picked up the trash that we inevitably come across while birding? Removing cans, cups, plastic bags, fishing line and other detritus from natural areas will help preserve the wildlife we treasure. I imagine that many of you already do this, so let's "up our game" with a challenge.

Here are the details:

- This is a TOTALLY VOLUNTARY challenge – for individual DFO members participating in field trips – and is NOT suggested in any way as a responsibility of trip leaders!
- Keep a garbage bag in your backpack or pocket whenever you go birding.
- When out in the field, pick up trash you observe along the trail as you bird.
- Take a photo of yourself (and your mates, if others help) with the filled bag o' rubbish, before depositing the bag in a suitable receptacle.
- Email the photo to the administrator/person in charge of the trail, park or other location where you birded (it's easy to find most of these contacts online), along with a friendly message about what you did, how much you appreciate that location/habitat, and letting them know the "cleanup was courtesy of DFO."
- Post the photo on the DFO Facebook Page, along with one or two sentences about where you were and who helped. Be sure to note that you did this as part of the DFO BRING-A-BAG-WHEN-YOU-BIRD CHALLENGE. Challenge others to do the same – all in good fun!

There are several benefits to the challenge, starting with the good feeling you'll get helping to keep natural habitat "natural." You will also set a great example for others by performing a public service. You will create goodwill for DFO with those who manage all the places we bird! Finally, you will help DFO "walk the talk" of environmental responsibility and respect of wildlife and their habitats.

DECEMBER BIRDING *cont. from page 10*

Rufous-crowned Sparrows can be found at the end of Tunnel Drive west of Cañon City and have already been reported from this location from June through October. Sometimes a **Golden-crowned Sparrow** has been reported in this area, hanging around with the flocks of **White-crowned Sparrows** that winter there. If you go to Cañon City, don't fail to check the pines in the local parks and around The Abbey at the east side of town for all three species of sapsucker. Speaking of which, **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** are annual visitors to City Park in Pueblo. Look in the big pines at the east end of the park. Look carefully, as the sapsuckers frequently sit motionless on the trunk of the tree.

Bohemian Waxwings can be incredible during invasion years. Chatfield State Park has had hundreds in the campgrounds and you need to look anywhere there are fruit or crabapples on trees, like in and around Greenlee Preserve in Boulder County. Make sure you check all waxwings for the cinnamon undertail coverts of the Bohemian Waxwing, which is larger than the more commonly seen **Cedar Waxwing**.

The annual Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are conducted during the last two weeks of December and into January. Count leaders are always looking for more help in covering their areas and novices are as welcome as experts at all counts. Be sure to read the article elsewhere in this newsletter about the DFO count being held on Saturday, Dec. 14.

DFO Board begins strategic planning effort

The Denver Field Ornithologists Board of Directors met on Oct. 5 to begin creating a strategic plan for our organization that will guide our activities through December 2022. At the all-day retreat, professional facilitator Laureen Trainer guided board members through a series of discussions that led to the adoption of four overarching goals:

Integrate conservation in everything we do

- Determine what conservation means to DFO, given that we are a birding organization, our primary focus is the front range of Colorado, and we provide ornithological expertise in an urban area
- Develop a process for taking positions on conservation issues and communicate those positions to members and nonmembers
- Determine how DFO as an organization will “walk the talk” of conservation through policies we adopt and practices we model

Attract new members, especially those ages 18-55 and families

- Develop a membership committee of at least four members who will elect a membership chair
- Create new membership categories based on feedback from the recent member survey
- Roll out projects, field trips and programs to engage new members

Improve and enhance the quality of member experience

- Develop programs and workshops that are relevant to today's audiences
- Provide the necessary leadership skills training for field trip leaders and workshop leaders
- Expand the diversity of field trips offered

Establish meaningful partnerships with like-minded organizations to further bird conservation and enhance the quality of membership experience

- Identify potential partners, partnerships, and contacts
- Identify the events, issues, and circumstances where partnership is desirable or essential
- Develop a process for evaluating potential/real partnership opportunities

The discussions that led to these goals were informed in part by responses to a recent member survey. These goals seek to build on what DFO now does well. The next step is for the board and DFO committees to create plans to complete this vital work over the next three years. One of the keys to implementing goals successfully is to add new members to existing committees and create new committees where needed. That means lots of new volunteer opportunities for all DFO members in the coming year. If you are interested in being a part of this exciting future for DFO, please fill out the form on the [volunteer page of the DFO website](#). Or, contact any member of the DFO Board to express your interest. A list of board members appears in every issue of *The Lark Bunting*.

Many thanks to the committee that planned the board retreat. Susan Blansett led the planning effort, assisted by Dave Hill, Debbie James, Bea Weaver, Karen von Saltza, Bill Turner and Sharon Tinianow.

Welcome to new DFO members:

Karen Bellina, Denver; John-Edd Brown, Denver; Virginia Dickinson, Denver; Kathy Holland, Centennial; Deborah Lind, Englewood; Donna Mangum, Aurora; Sofia Aguilar and Michele Ostrander, Denver; Ron Schneider and Celia Schneider, Castle Rock; Mort Wegman-French, Boulder; Lyn and Warren Wickelgren, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund:

Judy and Rick Creswell, Sonja and Grace Hahn, Sue Hall, Roy Hohn, Kathy Holland, Tim and Candice Johnson, Deborah Lind, Ron Schneider and Celia Schneider

Speciation speculation: Which species might split next?

Chris Goulart

Almost 10 years ago, the ornithologist, author and bird illustrator David Allen Sibley published a blog that detailed his predictions for the next 10 species “splits” – the annual species checklist updates from the American Ornithologists’ Union’s North American Checklist Committee (NACC). This committee reviews speciation within avifauna – the formation of new and distinct bird species – in the Western Hemisphere and makes determinations about which bird groupings are designated as species, sub-species, or races. The group also determines common naming conventions and accepts scientific names. Each year, bird listers (and I do realize that not all birders are listers) anxiously await the checklist’s release.

Ten years later, we find that four of Sibley’s predicted splits came true:

1. Eastern and Mexican Whip-poor-will
2. Pacific and Winter Wren
3. The Xantus’s Murrelet split into Scripps’s Murrelet and Guadalupe Murrelet
4. The Western Scrub-jay split into Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay and California Scrub-Jay

His other six predicted splits (Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-breasted Nuthatch, Willet, Spruce Grouse, Marsh Wren, and Fox Sparrow) did not occur. In addition, Sibley mentioned other possible splits including Curve-billed Thrasher (Eastern and Western), Eastern Meadowlark (Eastern and Lillian’s), Red Crossbill (which actually did have a split last year with designation of the Cassia Crossbill as a separate species), and Savannah Sparrow (Continental and Belding’s).

I agree with Sibley that all these splits are likely to occur within the next decade. In the interest of adding my own thoughts to the mix, I humbly submit for your review my thoughts for the next ten species splits.

1. Red-tailed Hawk and Harlan’s Hawk

Harlan’s was actually considered a separate species from the Red-tailed Hawk until 1974, when the committee lumped them back together again. The Red-tailed Hawk is one of the most morphologically diverse birds in North America. In fact, Clark stated that morphological differences between Harlan’s and Red-tailed are greater than any other subspecies in the entire family Accipitridae.¹ Among other key differences:

- There is only limited cross-breeding at the geographical zone of intergradation
- Juvenile Red-tailed Hawks look significantly different than the adults, while juvenile Harlan’s Hawks look almost identical to adults
- Harlan’s leg feathers extend almost all the way down the leg, unique among Red-tailed subspecies, and
- All Harlan’s Hawks are entirely migratory, also unique among subspecies

2. Red-Shouldered Hawk, Eastern and Western sub-species

The eastern and western subspecies of Red-shouldered Hawk have been reproductively separate for at least 150,000 years, with no gene flow between populations. Today, the western subspecies is smaller than all eastern subspecies, and it exhibits variations in call and hunting behavior. Finally, the Western subspecies has more red on the shoulders, more barring on the breast and generally wider bands on the tail. The young of western birds appear more like the adults at a much earlier age and almost seem to lack a juvenile stage after their first full molt. According to the Global Raptor Information Network, “Using both mitochondrial and nuclear genes, Hull et al.² found significant population distinction between Eastern (B. l. lineatus/alleni/texanus) and Western (B.l. elegans) subspecies.”

3. Northern Pygmy-Owl and Mexican Pygmy-Owl

Although there are seven subspecies of Northern Pygmy Owl, they are typically arranged into two groups based on vocalization and size. The Californicus group includes the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Slope subspecies. The Gnoma group includes birds in extreme Southeast Arizona and Mexico.³ Their vocalizations also differ, with Californicus subspecies delivering single-note hoots more slowly and Gnoma subspecies delivering much more rapid double hoots.⁴ Also, the Gnoma owls in SE Arizona and Mexico tend to be smaller and with shorter wings than the more northerly Californicus owls.

4. Eastern and Western Warbling Vireo

There are two clearly discernable subspecies of Warbling Vireo: Eastern Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus gilvus*) and Western Warbling Vireo (*V. g. swainsoni*). Some taxonomists actually break up the species into seven subspecies! But according to *Birds of North America*, the eastern and western races “differ in overall size, *gilvus* averaging larger than *swainsoni* in bill size (depth and length), wing chord, and mass.” In fact, the western subspecies is 25 percent smaller than the eastern. Also, Barlow noted in 1999 that *swainsoni* has a choppy song with more breaks, highs and lows.⁵

Continued on page 14

5. Mexican Duck and Mallard

Some rogue citizen scientists at ebird (www.ebird.org) have already elevated the Mexican Duck to full species status. Genetic evidence does suggest that the Mexican is more closely related to the Black Duck and Mottled Duck than to the Mallard.⁶ Unlike the Mallard but like the Mottled, the Mexican Duck is not sexually dimorphic.

6. Great Blue Heron and Great White Heron

The Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) is split into as many as 10 subspecies, but the Great White Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*) is the most distinct. The *occidentalis* subspecies is uniformly white with a very yellow bill that has little if any gray on it. This subspecies is found in South Florida including the Keys, and on Cuba, Jamaica, other islands in the Northern Caribbean, and the Yucatan. Although hybrids between Great White and Great Blue are known in Florida, the subspecies' assertive mating has exceptionally high nesting occupancy with members of the same subspecies, avoiding interbreeding in most cases. Also, in Florida the Great White and Great Blue tend to mate at different times.⁷

7. Eastern Bluebird and Azure Bluebird

Of the seven known subspecies of Eastern Bluebird, the predominant form lives in the eastern U.S. and Canada, while all others are in the American Southwest and Central America. The eastern subspecies' greatly enhanced coloration and longer and narrower bill separate it from all the others. Those six southern and western subspecies have overlap, but there have been no known pairings with have the eastern. In Arizona, the Azure subspecies has different coloration (less bright blue and browner sides and cheeks) and behavior (completely non-migratory). Song difference has not yet been documented.

8. Purple Martin, Interior Martin and Western Martin

The three subspecies of Purple Martin appear to have reproductive isolation. The classic eastern Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) is in the East while the *P.s. hesperia* subspecies inhabits the American Southwest and western Mexico and *P.s. arboricola* is in the mountains of the West. They differ morphologically, too: *arboricola* is the largest, *hesperia* is whiter underneath and paler overall, and both *arboricola* and *hesperia* do not require human interventions for nesting.

9. Yellow Warbler, Mangrove Warbler, and Golden Warbler

The Mangrove Warbler is considered a Yellow Warbler subspecies that lives in far south Texas and eastern Mexico. The Mangrove male has a completely tan/rufous head, and the

subspecies breeds only in coastal mangrove forests and does not migrate. The Golden is a non-migrating Yellow Warbler subspecies found on Caribbean islands and occasionally in far South Florida and the Florida Keys. The male has a dark brown cap and significantly darker brown streaking on the breast. Reproductive isolation of all three subspecies has been clearly demonstrated.

10. Brown Creeper and Mexican Creeper

In a January 2011 posting on his Sibley Guides website, Sibley makes a valid argument for treating the Brown Creeper as more than one species. According to research conducted by Manthey et al. in 2011, the species' genetic profile supports a division into four species: Eastern, Interior, Pacific and Central American.⁸ In North America this would roughly follow the profile of the sapsuckers and the Solitary Vireo clade.⁹

Finally, a few other species that might well be split in the coming years: Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Southwestern Cuckoo; Indigo Bunting and Desert Bunting; Swainson's Thrush and Medville Thrush.

Sources:

¹ Clark, W (2014) Global Raptor Information Research [http://www.globalraptors.org/grin/researchers/uploads/155/harlansplumagesdifferrev2-14_\(1\).pdf](http://www.globalraptors.org/grin/researchers/uploads/155/harlansplumagesdifferrev2-14_(1).pdf)

² Hull, et Al. (2008). "Comparative phylogeography and population genetics within *Buteo lineatus* reveals evidence of distinct evolutionary lineages." *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 49: 988–996

³ Holt, Denver and Petersen, Julie L. (2000). "Northern Pygmy-Owl." *Birds of North America* (<https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/nopowl/introduction>)

⁴ König, C. (1994). "Biological patterns in owl taxonomy, with emphasis on bioacoustical studies on neotropical Pygmy (*Glaucidium*) and Screech owls (*Otus*).". In *Raptor Conservation Today*, edited by B. U. Meyburg and R. D. Chancellor, 1-19. Berlin: Pica Press.

⁵ Society, National Geographic. (1999). *Field guide to the birds of North America*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C: Natl. Geogr. Soc.

⁶ Lavretsky, P., J. M. Dacosta, B. E. Hernández-Baños, A. Engilis, Jr., M. D. Sorenson, and J. L. Peters (2015). "Speciation genomics and a role for the Z chromosome in the early stages of divergence between Mexican Ducks and Mallards." *Molecular Ecology* 24 (21):5364-5378. doi: 10.1111/mec.13402.

⁷ McGuire, H.L., Taylor, S.S. & Sheldon, F.H. (2019). "Evaluating the taxonomic status of the Great White Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*) using morphological, behavioral and genetic evidence." *The Auk*, 136(1):uky010.

⁸ Manthey, J. D., J. Klicka, and G. M. Spellman. (2011). "Cryptic diversity in a widespread North American songbird: Phylogeography of the Brown Creeper (*Certhia ameri-cana*).". *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 58:502–512.

⁹ Moore, Nick (Fall 2016). "A Closer Look at Colorado's Brown Creepers." *Colorado Birds*, Colorado Field Ornithologists Volume 50 #4

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Register for DFO field trips on the website or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks and/or lunch, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. January field trips will appear on the website on December 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

First Creek at RM Arsenal Sunday, December 1

7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Start the final month of 2019 with the winter birds of First Creek. Expect lots of raptors (hawks, eagles, falcons), some cold-season songbirds (solitaires, juncos), waterfowl and First Creek's year-round regulars.

North-Central Colorado Monday, December 2

6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

John Malenich & David Suddjian
Email: john.malenich@comcast.net
Phone: 303-359-9456
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

We will bird a variety of locations along the Northern Front Range in Boulder, Larimer and/or Weld Counties seeking interesting waterbirds, raptors, and landbirds of the late fall season.

Annual Barrow's Goldeneye Count to Silverthorne Wednesday, December 4

7:30 AM - 5:30 PM

Paul Slingsby
Email: paslingsby@comcast.net
Phone: 720-347-5169
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

We will count Barrow's Goldeneyes and other birds at the Silverthorne water treatment plant and then drive to Hot Sulphur Springs (rosy-finches), Lake Granby, Shadow Mountain Lake, and Grand Lake. Spotting scopes, binoculars, and 2-way radios will be useful.

Park County Explorations Tuesday, December 10

6:30 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

This trip will visit northeastern and northern Park County, seeking rosy-finch flocks and other winter mountain specialties in forest and open habitats, and in towns. Contact the leader.

Denver Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 14

Times and locations and leaders vary

Full listing in the CBC article in this newsletter and on the Field Trip registration page on the DFO website. All are welcome to join in this effort! A meeting to compile results and a potluck will follow this fun day in the field counting birds.

Southwestern Metro Area Monday, December 16

7:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 8

This will be a Monday morning post-Denver CBC exploration to seek and enjoy some of the good birds found on Saturday's count, hopefully including some rare species. And maybe we'll find something new.

South Platte Park Friday, December 27

2:30 PM - 5:30 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

This late afternoon-to-sunset trip will focus on South Platte Park Reservoir and the nearby areas of South Platte Park. We should enjoy a nice variety of waterbirds, and may have an opportunity to study gulls at the reservoir. Plan to walk about 2 miles on snowy paths. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Southwestern Metro Area Monday, December 30

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Easy

This will be a short morning outing to celebrate our DFO field trip year, visiting 2-3 locations with fun birds, maybe some new rare bird. We will conclude with lunch at Tacos Selene at 5924 S Kipling Pkwy, Littleton.

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	25
Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	60
Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$	10
Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$	_____

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:
Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

THE LARK BUNTING

6350 S Havana St, Apt 1212
Englewood, CO 80111-5660

